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**A Study of the Direct Ramifications of
Vatican Council II on Catechetics,
Including the
Impact of Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Catechetical
Documents
On the Content and Method of Catechesis**

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abbreviations.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter I: The Second Vatican Council and its Catechetical Legacy.....	8
Chapter II: Revelation, the Response of Faith, and Catechetics.....	81
Chapter III: The Content of Catechesis: The Deposit of Faith.....	146
Chapter IV: The Pedagogy of God and Catechetical Methodology.....	220
Chapter V: Conclusion.....	293
Bibliography.....	309

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“Jesus said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and all men marveled” (Mark 5:19-20). I share in the joy of the cured man and his desire to simply go home to the Lord. The Lord has done so much for me during the past few years, and has blessed me with his mercy!

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Praised be Jesus Christ!

Abbreviations Used

Magisterial Texts

CT	<i>Catechesi Tradendae</i>
CR	<i>Catechesis of Revelation</i>
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CL	<i>Christifidelis Laici</i>
DF	<i>Dei Filius</i>
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i>
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
FR	<i>Fides et Ratio</i>
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
GCD	<i>General Catechetical Directory</i>
GDC	<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i>
GC	<i>Guide for Catechists</i>
HV	<i>Humanae Vitae</i>
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
NCD	<i>National Catechetical Directory</i>
OT	<i>Optatam Totius</i>
RM	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>
UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i>

Vatican Congregations

CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
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Texts

CRE	<i>Christian Religious Education</i>
DR	<i>Design for Religion</i>
ST	<i>Scripture and Tradition</i>
TR	<i>Theology of Revelation</i>
TPR	<i>The Present Revelation</i>
VT	<i>Vision and Tactics</i>

Abstract

In June 1997, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein informed the Bishops of the United States of the findings of his *Ad Hoc Committee of the Use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. After examining most of the religious education textbooks in use in the US, the committee determined that the following doctrinal points were inadequately or insufficiently treated: the Trinity, Christ especially his divinity, the ecclesial nature of catechesis, Christian anthropology, God's initiative in the world with an overemphasis on man, grace, sacraments, original sin and sin in general, Christian moral life, and eschatology.

These deficiencies occurred as a direct ramification of the turbulence and disquiet in the Catholic Church since the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. This had not been the desire of John XXIII when he opened the Council: "The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this, that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously."¹ Pope Paul VI, whose pontificate implemented the Council, considered it to be the "great catechism of modern times."²

The deficiencies resulted from what Benedict XVI calls a "hermeneutic of discontinuity" between the time before Vatican II and the time after Vatican II.³ Gabriel Moran, Thomas Groome and many of their contemporaries in American religious education failed to look to Jesus Christ, the apostles and the Fathers of the Church as the foundation for their catechetical renewal. Ultimately they rejected Divine Revelation and adopted a low non-ascending Christology. They rejected 20th - century theologians such as Josef Jungmann and Johannes Hofinger who applied a hermeneutic of continuity to their renewal. Charles Curran helped to inculcate such a spirit by his public dissent from *Humanae Vitae* in 1968. The protagonists ignored or subjugated the post-conciliar magisterial catechetical documents. The American Bishops failed to stem such rejection of magisterial teaching and to mandate their own attempts at catechetical renewal.

¹ John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, AAS 26 (1962), 792.

² "Through his gestures, his preaching, his authoritative interpretation of the Second Vatican Council (considered by him to be the great catechism of modern times), and through the whole of his life, my venerated predecessor Paul VI served the Church's catechesis in a particularly exemplary fashion" (CT 2).

³ Benedict XVI, Christmas Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia, [www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/doc](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/doc, December 22, 2005), December 22, 2005.

Introduction

Peter Eicher eschewed the institutional Church's control over experience. "The constitutive difference between the original situation of Christian proclamation and the need to make it ordinarily relevant by means of institutionalization shows the short-circuit operating when theologians and officeholders ask only one question, 'Why doesn't the grassroots Catholic accept the Church's teaching any longer? How are we to speak if we want to understand people today.'" ¹ Eicher asks "whether the alienation of the authority of the magisterium from the authority of the experience is a characteristic of modern Catholicism." ² In many ways this passage connotes the main theme of the research presented in this dissertation.

On March 22, 1994, the Bishops of the United States ³ responded to the publication of the *Catechism* by establishing a subcommittee on the implementation of the Catechism. Indianapolis Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, OSB was appointed chairman. In 1995, under the direction of Fr. John Pollard, a "Protocol" was developed to evaluate catechetical series as to their conformity to the *Catechism*. In April of 1996, the Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism began to review catechetical materials that were voluntarily submitted by publishers.

On June 19, 1997 Archbishop Buechlein delivered the Committee's findings at the spring meeting of the Bishops' Conference. He summarized the findings of his committee by listing ten "deficiencies" found in catechesis in general, and reflected specifically in catechetical textbooks. ⁴ The deficiencies reflect the inadequate

¹ Peter Eicher, "Administered Revelation: The Official Church and Revelation", in *Revelation and Experience*, Edward Schillebeeckx and Bas van Iersel, eds. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 7. This volume is part of Concilium: Religion in the Seventies, a multi-volume library of contemporary religious thought published in 10 volumes annually.

² Ibid.

³ For sake of clarity, the official name of the body of Bishops in the United States is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Before 2001 this body was referred to as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and worked with another national body called the United States Catholic Conference. These two groups often appeared to be one group referred to by their initials, NCCB/USCC. In this paper, according to the time frame, the official body of the American bishops could be referred to as either USCCB or NCCB.

⁴ Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, Oral Report to the General Assembly of Bishops, June 19, 1997.

delivery of integral doctrinal points of Catholic teaching:

1. Insufficient attention to the Trinity and the Trinitarian structure of Catholic beliefs and teachings centrality of Christ
2. An obscured presentation of the centrality of Christ in salvation history and insufficient emphasis on the divinity of Christ
3. An indistinct treatment of the ecclesial context of Catholic beliefs and magisterial teachings
4. An inadequate sense of a distinctively Christian anthropology
5. Insufficient emphasis on God's initiative in the world, with a corresponding overemphasis on human action
6. Insufficient recognition of the transforming effects of grace
7. Inadequate presentation of the sacraments
8. Deficiency in the teaching of original sin and sin in general
9. Meager exposition on the Christian moral life
10. Inadequate presentation of eschatology

In an address at Franciscan University of Steubenville the Archbishop discussed the work of the bishops in determining the deficiencies in religious education texts.⁵ He made two points.

- 1) In each of these areas of concern, the Committee presents concrete direction to the publishers that have made and continue to make the texts more complete and more faithful to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in their treatment of the content of our Faith. I want to emphasize that the publishers have been and are generally cooperative in accepting the required or recommended changes and incorporating them into their texts. For this we are all grateful.
- 2) It is important to understand why there have been deficiencies in our catechetical resources. Neither the intent nor the outcome are necessarily lacking in orthodoxy. In other words, incomplete texts are not necessarily heretical in what is presented, yet they are incomplete and thus can be gravely misleading. The problem and the hazard, I assert, is plausibility situated as the first principle of inculturation. The deficient result is just that, a deficiency, a lack of precision and fullness concerning doctrinal truth in catechesis. Inculturation and the methodology of inculturation may not overlook the full doctrinal truth of the Catholic doctrine in catechesis, in preaching and in the texts of our worship and prayer. Many of our Christian ancestors gave their very lives for the fullness of the Christian truth.

In investigating the cause and effect of these deficiencies, the question must be asked, "How did such lacunae form in the delivery of the Deposit of Faith during the

implementation of Vatican II?" "Archbishop Buechlein's report did not get down to particulars, but that such general statements can be made about catechetical materials ought to shock us for the simple reason that many of the text series submitted to the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee are revisions of previous series which had formerly received imprimaturs."⁶ How, then, did the catechetical materials which have been judged to be gravely misleading, earlier receive official sanction?

Pope Paul VI, whose pontificate implemented the Council, considered it to be the "great catechism of modern times."⁷ How did catechists, including bishops and diverse bodies of national catechetical leaders, apply the two-fold *aggiornamento* of the Council to catechetical practice, especially in the United States? And after three decades of such implementation, how did the state of catechesis devolve to the condition described by Archbishop Buechlein and his committee?

To answer these questions we must look at the Second Vatican Council itself – why it was called and what impact it had on the Church in general and on catechetics specifically. Gerald O'Collins analyzed the reception of the Council of Nicea by the Cappadocians, Sts. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus and Macrina. From them he gleaned four tests of creative fidelity in the reception of conciliar teaching and decrees including that of Vatican II: "(1) a deeper experience of salvation that comes through real sensitivity to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit; (2) a richer experience of life-giving worship and community; (3) fidelity to biblical witness; and (4) a generous service of those who suffer."⁸ Was this the case after Vatican II? The following chapters will provide an answer to that question.

⁵ Ibid., "The Cultural Plausibility and Inculturation of our Beliefs: A Report on the Pastoral Service Provided by the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for the Use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church", given at Franciscan University of Steubenville, November 17, 2001, (used with permission).

⁶ Sean Innerst, "Catechetical Experience and the Experience of Catechesis," www.catholic.net/RCC/Periodicals/Dossier/nov97/experience.html.

⁷ "The most recent popes gave catechesis a place of eminence in their pastoral solicitude. Through his gestures, his preaching, his authoritative interpretation of the Second Vatican Council (considered by him to be the great catechism of modern times), and through the whole of his life, my venerated predecessor Paul VI served the Church's catechesis in a particularly exemplary fashion" (CT 2).

⁸ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education*, (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference Publications Office, 1973), 1.

⁸ Gerald O'Collins, SJ, *Living Vatican II*, (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2006), 61.

This entailed looking at the post-conciliar magisterial documents that addressed catechesis or religious education. This was the major undertaking of the research. The documents, from the Vatican and from the American bishops provide the primary resources for this study, and their implementation is one of the chief concerns of this research.

These documents are rooted in the 2000 history of the Church. Because of this, it was not necessary to do primary research concerning the teaching of the Church up until the Council. However, a brief look at the early ecumenical councils, the Council of Trent and Vatican II was necessary for several reasons: to determine the nature of the deposit of faith, the purpose of Vatican II, and the practice of catechesis in the history of the Church. Catechesis has always had two facets, the content and the method of delivery of the content.

The research also was directed toward the two major catechetical journals in existence at the close or shortly after the close of the Council in 1965: *Lumen Vitae*, published by *Lumen Vitae* Catechetical Institute, Louvain, and *Living Light*, published through the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership under the auspices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The result of these studies was the determination of the major figures that influenced the ultimate cause of the deficiencies in religious education textbooks. These included Josef Jungmann, SJ, Johannes Hofinger, SJ, Msgr. Rudolph Bandas, Gabriel Moran, Msgr. Eugene Kevane, and Thomas Groome.

Catechesis has been interpreted as to echo, or moving in a downward direction from the source.

This meaning is the foundation for its ecclesiastical usage: the message of God resounds downward in the direction of men, according to the words contained in the Office of the Apostles taken from Psalm 18: 'into all the earth there sound goes forth'. The word is also used in a transitive sense—"to instruct someone", especially in the sense of 'an instruction for beginners. The word then became the technical term to designate the teaching given by the Church; this is the catechesis...; the catechist... is the one who imparts the training; the catechumen...is the one to whom it is imparted, the one who receives it.⁹

⁹ Josef Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), xii-xiv.

Because the deficiencies concern key doctrinal points of the Catholic Church, the source of doctrine-Divine Revelation- was investigated. This entailed a study of the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum*. The *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*¹⁰ was utilized, as well as the work of Rene Latourelle, who wrote immediately after the Council. The reciprocal movement of revelation and response of faith engendered research into the assent of faith of Catholic theologians, particularly the dissent in 1968 to the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* by Charles Curran, and theologians throughout the western Church. John Henry Cardinal Newman addressed such issues in his *Grammar of Assent*, which has catechetical implications as well.

In the years immediately after the Council, Gabriel Moran became well known for his work concerning the place of revelation in catechesis. His contribution to catechesis in general and to the content of catechesis in particular as articulated in *Theology of Revelation* and *Catechesis of Revelation* deserves careful study. In addition, Moran had difficulties with the kerygmatic approach to catechesis, developed principally by Josef Jungmann, SJ, and Johannes Hofinger, SJ. The writings of Jungmann and Hofinger sound, at times, like several of the post-conciliar documents, such as the *General Catechetical Directory* and *Catechesi Tradendae*. Therefore it was decided to look at their contribution to catechesis before the Council, and afterward.

Catechesis always has two components: content and method. In 1953, Rev. Joseph Collins wrote, "The educational science of catechetics is essentially made up of content and of methods: of what is to be taught in the class of religion, and how to teach it. Since the content of catechetics is primarily concerned with the truths of revelation, together with the authoritative teachings of the Church, its task is to bring *dogmatic theology* to the people according to their capacity to understand."¹¹ He described dogmatic theology as a body of knowledge based on supernatural

¹⁰ *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Volume 3, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969).

¹¹ Joseph B. Collins, *Teaching Religion: An Introduction to Catechetics*, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1953), 7.

revelation.¹² He also believed that at the heart of catechetics was the practical application, that is, have an effect on life and conduct.¹³ It is important to see if his description of catechetics was extant after the Council.

Because the deficiencies occurred in the context of religious education in the United States, the research focused on American sources. Gabriel Moran wrote that Americans “have little sense of place...I suggest that a major part of religious education in the U.S. should be cultivation of love of one’s own place and the respect for the place of others.”¹⁴

Moran’s influence on the content was significant. His counterpart in regard to method is Thomas Groome. Both Moran and Groome have international reputations. *Dei Verbum* speaks of the pedagogy of God in regard to revelation. Therefore, this pedagogy was studied particularly as it was applied in the *General Catechetical Directory* and *Catechesi Tradendae*. Frequently, St. Paul and St. Augustine were regarded as master catechists. Their unique “methodologies” were looked at in order to identify a Christian methodology. Groome’s singular contribution to catechesis is *Christian Religious Education*, in which he gives the philosophical and pedagogical rationale for the development of his methodology called “Shared Christian Praxis”. The contribution of St. John Bosco was looked at briefly because he has a specific methodology which he called the “Preventive System”. Cardinal Newman also has a unique contribution in the role of personal influence which is a strong theme in Paul, Augustine, Bosco, as well as the magisterial documents.

In addition to the research undertaken to complete this study, my own personal experience was a determining factor. I was ten years old when the Council closed. I attended Catholic elementary and secondary schools. I had faithful Catholic parents; religion was a profound reality in our home. Because of this I have keen memories of the Council and its aftermath: the switch from a question and answer format of religious education to open ended discussion, to the voluntary “values education” classes I attended in high school. I became a religious sister in 1973, as thousands of

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, 5.

women religious were leaving their communities. I received my theological education at St. Louis University, careful to avoid faculty that were not in agreement with the Church's teaching. I began working as a volunteer catechist in 1976, as a 'professional' in 1979. I have remained in professional catechesis. I earned my Master's Degree under Msgr. Eugene Kevane, whose life and writings appear throughout this dissertation. I have served as catechist, Diocesan Director of Religious Education, chaired a High School religion department, served as a parish Director of Religious Education, and presently teach catechetics at Franciscan University of Steubenville. In addition to the research, this is the frame of reference from which I am writing.

Contribution of this Research

As far as can be determined there has not been any attempt to discover the root cause of the deficiencies. There have been many articles concerning the process and the results of the Bishops' study. Most are vitriolic in nature, which will be detailed throughout the remainder of this dissertation. Since my initial research, I have made a concerted effort to look at both sides of the issue fairly. The premise underlying my approach to this research was that since Vatican II the Catholic Church has been explicit about the nature and purpose of catechesis, rooted in its determination to remain in the continuity from the life of Jesus and the practice of the early Church. As far as can be determined, no one has looked at the protagonists and attitudes that undermined catechesis since the Council in relation to the magisterial documents.

¹⁴ Gabriel Moran, "The Teaching of American Religion", in *Emerging Issues in Religious Education*, Gloria Durka and Joanne Smith eds., (New York: Paulist Press, 1976).

Chapter I

The Second Vatican Council and its Catechetical Legacy

Introduction

Three of the deficiencies found in textbooks by the Bishops' Committee bear directly on the dogmatic teachings of the early ecumenical councils: insufficient attention to the Trinity and the Trinitarian structure of Catholic beliefs and teachings; an obscured presentation of the centrality of Christ in salvation history and insufficient emphasis on the divinity of Christ; an indistinct treatment of the ecclesial context of Catholic beliefs and magisterial teachings. These dogmatic teachings, though, are crucial to the Church. How could this have been missed? How could such central teachings be insufficiently attended to and observed?

These questions cannot be answered without a brief review of the early doctrinal tradition and the place this has in the Church's self-understanding. The following cursory account, then, serves not as a complete and detailed history¹, but as a doctrinal overview that highlights the basic teachings of the early councils and their importance to the Church.

Vatican II was the twenty-first ecumenical council. The councils are the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium, or teaching office of the Church, comprised of the Pope and the Bishops of the Church in union with him. Primarily the Church has called for Ecumenical (universal) Councils to deal with heresy, crisis, or confusion regarding doctrine. The first six councils were called to solve Christological controversies and heresies: Nicea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Constantinople II (553), and Constantinople III (680-81). The Council of Trent (1545-1560) dealt with the effects of the Protestant Reformation. Vatican I (1869-1870) discussed revelation, faith, the papacy and the Church in the light of controversial teaching prevalent at the time. Vatican II (1962-1965) was convoked "mainly to more effectively preserve and present the sacred deposit of Christian

¹ Many histories have been written: Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*; The Venerable Bede *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*; Joseph Andreas Jungmann's *Handing on the Faith*; Berard Marthaler's *The Catechism, Yesterday and Today*.

doctrine.”² In convoking the Council, Pope John XXIII stated, “The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this, that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously.”³

Summary of the Christological Councils⁴

The treatment of the Christological councils will merely identify their significant doctrinal concerns. “The period from Constantine to Pope Leo the Great (d.461) was one of decisive importance to the history of the Catholic Church. Many of the basic features of Catholicism were fixed during these years in the form they were to retain, with relatively few modifications, for the next fifteen hundred years.”⁵

1. Nicea- condemned Arianism, defined that the son of God is consubstantial with the Father, and formulated the Nicene Creed.
2. Constantinople I – Condemned the Macedonians who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Confirmed and extended the Nicene Creed.
3. Ephesus – Condemned Nestorianism, which held that there were two distinct persons in the Incarnate Christ, a human and divine. Defended the right of Mary to be called the Mother of God (*theotokos*).
4. Chalcedon – Condemned Monophysitism or Eutychianism by defining that Christ had two distinct natures, and was therefore true God and true man.
5. Constantinople II – Pronounced against certain persons infested by Nestorianism by teaching that one of the Holy Trinity suffered on the cross.
6. Constantinople III – Defined against the Monothelites that Christ has two wills, human and divine.

Heresy

The greatest threat to the Church is heresy. Belloc departs from a theological definition,⁶ defining heresy as “the dislocation of some complete and self-supporting scheme by the introduction of a novel denial of some essential part therein.”⁷ It synthesizes the causes of the major doctrinal deficiencies found in American Catholic religious education texts. Belloc adds,

² John Hardon, *Pocket Catholic Dictionary*, (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1985), 125.

³ John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, AAS 26 (1962), 792.

⁴ Hardon, *Pocket Catholic Dictionary*, (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1985) 178. The names of the Councils were taken from the location where they met.

⁵ Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, rev. ed. (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1979), 53.

⁶ “Theologically it means an opinion at variance with the authorized teachings of any Church, notably the Christian, and especially when this promotes separation from the main body of faithful believers” (Hardon, 175).

⁷ Hilaire Belloc, *The Great Heresies* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1938; reprint. Rockford, Illinois: Tan, 1991), 2.

Heresy means, then, the warping of a system by 'Exception': by 'Picking out' one part of the structure and implies that the scheme is marred by taking away one part of it, denying one part of it, and leaving the void unfilled or filling it with some new affirmation.⁸

The early heresies, which in some ways have been modified and recycled over the centuries, include Gnosticism, Arianism which almost destroyed the Church, Monophysitism, Monothelitism, Nestorianism, and Pelagianism.

Arianism

Arius (260-336), a priest of the diocese of Alexandria in Egypt, challenged his bishop, Alexander, concerning the nature of Christ. Alexander suspended him from priestly practice, but his teaching spread rapidly throughout the Catholic world. Belloc opines that Arianism became the way for many of the noble families, intellectuals, members of the Army, who had been attracted to Christianity, but liked the "old ways" especially the social mores.⁹

In summary Arianism held that God was only one person; the Son only a creature, not divine, chosen to be divine intermediary in creation and redemption of the world, he was the logos, the word, but not eternal. The heresy was anti-Trinitarian and the Incarnation was reduced to a figure of speech. "Arianism was willing to grant Our Lord every kind of honor and majesty short of the full nature of the Godhead."¹⁰

Cardinal Newman referred to the Arian crisis in describing those who believe the Church *imposes* her teaching in matters of faith and morals.¹¹ "The first who made this complaint was no less a man than the great Constantine, and on no less an occasion than the rise of the Arian heresy, which he, as yet a catechumen, was pleased to consider a trifling and tolerable error. So deciding the matter, he wrote at once a letter to Alexander... and to Arius...exhorting them to drop the matter in dispute, and to live in peace with one another."¹² Constantine urges the protagonists:

⁸ Belloc, *The Great Heresies*, 2.

⁹ Ibid., 17-24.

¹⁰ Ibid., 17

¹¹ John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (orig. pub. 1870; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 123.

¹² Ibid., 123-124.

Now, I say these things, not as compelling you all to see exactly alike on this very insignificant subject of controversy, whatever it may be; since the dignity of the communion may be preserved unaffected, and the same fellowship with all retained, even though there should exist among you some dissimilarity of sentiment on unimportant matters. For, of course, we do not all desire the same thing in every respect; nor is there one unvarying nature, or standard of judgment in us...and permit me speedily to behold both of you and all the rest of the people rejoicing together; and to express my due thanks to the Divine Being, because of the general harmony and liberty of all parties, accompanied by the general utterance of your praise.¹³

The *divinity of Christ* was not just an *insignificant* subject of controversy. The attitude of the letter is a portent of things to come. It appears again in ideas circulating among theologians at the time of Vatican I, of the tenets of the Modernist Heresy condemned by Pius X, and especially after Vatican II, when to many, not just members of the Church, tolerance of all views, perspectives, and beliefs has become a driving force. This attitude is an important facet in coming to understand how the doctrinal deficiencies in religion texts occurred after Vatican II.

Constantine, fearing disunity in the Empire, convoked the First Ecumenical Council, held in Nicea. Two phrases summarize the impact of Arianism. One is attributed to St. Jerome: “The world woke up and found it was Arian”. The other is anonymous: “Athanasius against the world.” Athanasius (296-373), a deacon accompanying Bishop Alexander to the Council, became *the* voice in the fight to preserve the sacred tradition of the Church that has been handed on from Christ to his apostles to the bishops.

“While Arians were much indebted to the rationalist philosophy of the day, Athanasius argued his case from the Christian theology of redemption: Christ had to be divine in order to cause our divination.”¹⁴ Athanasius led the bishops in understanding who Christ is by using the Greek word “*homoousious*” – Jesus was one in substance with the Father. “Though the bishops for the most part were men of modest learning, it did not take them long to decide that Arianism was not what they had been teaching and preaching all their lives.”¹⁵ The vote was almost unanimous. “In that first great defeat, when the strong vital tradition of Catholicism asserted itself

¹³ Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* 1, 7 (www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf202).

¹⁴ Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 62.

and Arius was condemned, the creed which his followers had drawn up [the Son was like the Father] was trampled underfoot as a blasphemy, but the spirit behind that creed and behind that revolt was to re-arise.¹⁶ The fight against Arianism was not over. “Arianism learned from its first heavy defeat at Nicea to compromise on forms, on the wording of doctrine, so that it might preserve and spread, with less opposition, its heretical spirit.”¹⁷

Athanasius found himself in the van of the Church’s effort to quash Arianism again and again. For this he was exiled five times. His determination came from his belief in the tradition handed on to the Church from the apostles, as Bokenkotter and Belloc alluded to, and is essential in understanding catechesis in the Church.¹⁸

Nicene Creed

The Council of Constantinople reiterated the teaching of Nicea and proclaimed the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit, therefore solidifying the Church’s teaching on the Trinity. The Council fathers at Nicea codified their teaching in the Nicene Creed. A creed is,

A brief, normative summary statement or profession of Christian faith, e.g., the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed. The word “Creed” comes from the Latin *Credo*, meaning “I believe,” with which the Creed begins. Creeds are also called Symbols of Faith.¹⁹

The Council of Constantinople expanded the Nicene Creed. At Mass, Catholics profess the Nicene-Constantinople Creed.

¹⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹⁶ Belloc, *The Great Heresies*, 28.

¹⁷ Ibid., 29.

¹⁸ See Alan Schreck, *The Compact History of the Catholic Church* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1987), 24. Schreck states that three things resulted from the Arian crisis. 1. The realization that it is dangerous for secular rulers to become involved with resolving theological and doctrinal disputes and with Church affairs in general. 2. The emergence of some great, heroic figures that stubbornly defended the truth that the Son of God is truly God. 3. The Catholic principle that it is legitimate to use non-biblical words to define or to clarify a truth of faith, if necessary. [*homoousious*]

¹⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter CCC), 2nd ed. (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992), Glossary, *sub* creed. See also CCC, 187. “The Greek word *symbolon* meant half of a broken object, for example a seal presented as a token of recognition. The broken parts were placed together to verify the bearer’s identity. The symbol of faith, then, is a sign of recognition and communion between believers” (CCC, 188).

The Apostles' Creed

Apostles' Creed²⁰ was in reality the Church's first creed. It contains her fundamental teaching. The content is attributed to the Apostles. Its doctrine is seen in Irenaeus' account of the profession of faith in the Catechumenate, the process by which those seeking to enter the Church learned her teaching and way of life. Irenaeus wrote "So, faith procures this for us, as the elders, the disciples of the apostles, have handed on to us..."²¹

Previously, he had written, "Therefore, lest we suffer any such thing [poison of heretical teaching], we must keep the rule of faith unswervingly, and perform the commandments of God..."²² His use of the Creed's content is an example of what Belloc and Bokenkotter were alluding to; the Church never produces a new teaching. She develops and clarifies what has been handed on by Christ. "Handing on" is a key concept will be given more discussion in proceeding chapters. The "rule of faith" that Irenaeus speaks of has been equated to the "deposit of faith."²³ The Greek word used for the deposit of faith is *paratheke*, a word that refers to something valuable handed on to someone of trust.²⁴

In his book *Against the Heresies*, Irenaeus gives a full description of the deposit of faith which follows the doctrinal substance of what later will be called "The Apostles' Creed." "The Church," he writes, "though dispersed throughout the whole world...has received the faith from the Apostles and their disciples."²⁵ Jungmann notes "As early

²⁰ Quoting St. Ambrose, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "*The Apostles' Creed* is so called because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith. It is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome. Its great authority arises from this fact: it is "the Creed of the Roman Church, the See of Peter the first of the apostles, to which he brought the common faith" (194).

²¹ Irenaeus, *On the Apostolic Preaching* 3; trans. John Behr (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 42.

²² *Ibid.*; trans. Behr, 41.

²³ "It is clear that the concept "deposit of faith" is basic and central in catechesis as the instrument and means for its Christocentrism. Cf. *General Catechetical Directory* (hereafter *GCD*), 40. Hence it is also the "Rule of Faith" in St. Irenaeus' sense, the norm of authenticity in Catechetics, and the chief criterion for evaluating syllabi and textbooks in religious education" (Eugene Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today* [Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1982], xx-xxi, nt. 11).

²⁴ <http://strongsnumbers.com/greek/3866.htm>; From *para* and *tithemi*; to place alongside, i.e. Present (food, truth); by implication, to deposit (as a trust or for protection) allege, commend, commit (the keeping of), put forth, set before. <http://strongsnumbers.com/greek/3908.htm>.

²⁵ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xxxiii.

as the third century the instruction culminated in the ‘handing over’ of the Apostle’s Creed, which the baptismal candidate had to recite before he received Baptism.”²⁶

Utilization of the Councils and Fathers of the Church

Coupled with an understanding of the early councils of the Church is an understanding of the Fathers of the Church.²⁷ Vatican II reflected on the earlier councils as sources of its own work, which was referred to as *ressourcement*.²⁸

It is important to note that *ressourcement* was not primarily a scholarly or intellectual work, but a work of revitalization. Indeed, the ‘sources’ for these theologians are not primarily historical documents, but rather wellsprings of dynamic spiritual life. The events and words of Scripture, the doctrine of the fathers, the creeds and decrees of the councils, the rites of the liturgy—all of these are, for them, vehicles, and in an analogous sense, sacraments of the dynamic and living Mystery of Christ. The ultimate goal of the renewal is not, then a more historical understanding of Christian origins, but rather, in Congar’s words, ‘a recentering in the person of Christ and his paschal mystery.’²⁹

In the *Decree on the Formation of Priests (Optatum Totius)*³⁰, the Council encouraged a study of the Fathers, “...there should be opened up to the students [seminarians] what the Fathers of the Eastern and Western Church have contributed to the faithful transmission and development of the individual truths of revelation.”³¹

²⁶ Josef Andreas Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith*, trans. and rev. A. N. Fuerst (Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1959), 3.

²⁷ “...saintly writers of the early centuries whom the Church recognizes as her special witnesses of the faith” (Hardon, *Pocket Catechism*, 146).

²⁸ A common term for post-conciliar reform was “aggiornamento,” an Italian word meaning “updating,” which conveyed the need for the Church to adjust itself to historical change, to make evangelization more effective by relating to the needs of the modern world. Less commonly used, and probably unfamiliar to most Catholics, was the French word “ressourcement” — “return to the sources” — which saw reform as recovering the earliest roots of the Faith, judging later developments by the criterion of authoritative early teachings. The dominant thrust of the conciliar decrees was the latter, and there is scarcely a passage anywhere in them which is not supported by references to Scripture, and sometimes to the Fathers of the Church. James Hitchcock “Was Vatican II ‘Pre-conciliar’?” *Catholic Dossier*, 6 (2000) <http://www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Dossier/2000-12/toc.html>.

“It was Pius XI, according to Congar, who had been the first to issue the call ‘*revertimini ad fontes*’ in speaking of the liturgy.” Unfortunately Congar supplies no reference. See Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’église*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Du Cerf, 1968), 337; cited in Marcellino G. D’Ambrosio, “Henri de Lubac and the Recovery of the Traditional Hermeneutic,” (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1991), 9.

²⁹ D’Ambrosio, “Henri de Lubac and the Recovery of the Traditional Hermeneutic,” 9.

³⁰ The use of this decree of Vatican II that has a specific audience is not out of place in the discussion of catechetics. The Church is, after all, universal, and the Vatican II documents were meant for all in the Church. In addition, as will be described later in more detail, catechesis is a ministry of the Word, and as such is comes under the authority of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. Conversely, seminaries come under the authority of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education.

³¹ *Optatum Totius*, 16.

The post-conciliar *General Catechetical Directory* speaks of the sources used in order to come to an understanding of who Jesus is, a primary function of catechesis.

The correct explanation of the mystery of the Incarnation developed in Christian tradition: through a diligent understanding of the faith, the Fathers and the Councils made efforts to determine more precisely the concepts, to explain more profoundly the peculiar nature of Christ's mystery, to investigate the hidden connections that bind him to his heavenly Father and to men.³²

The Protestant Reformation

The Council of Trent was called,

...to meet the crisis of the Protestant Reformation; proclaimed the Bible and Tradition as rule of faith, defined doctrine on the Mass, the sacraments, justification, purgatory, indulgences, invocation of the saints, veneration of sacred images, issued decrees on marriage and clerical reform.³³

The Protestant Reformation cut at the heart of Catholic Church teaching, "The movement generally called 'the Reformation' deserves a place in the story of the great heresies..."³⁴

"The Reformation" is a general term that describes the greatest sundering of the Catholic Church in her history. It was not caused by one man, movement, or heresy, but a synthesis of untrained clergy, laxity in practice and morality by clergy and laity, troubled and troubling popes and hierarchy, all superimposed on a political situation in which the monarchies or ruling houses of many countries were at odds with the Pope.

Its main theological protagonists were Martin Luther in Germany and John Calvin in Geneva. Henry VIII welcomed the Reformation to England when he sought a divorce in order to remarry and gain a male heir. He proclaimed himself the head of the Church in England in 1534, and severed his ties with Rome.

The theological history of the reformation is one of lateral devolution, in which each new movement moved farther away from the teaching of the Catholic Church. Luther

³² *GCD*, 53.

³³ Hardon, *Pocket Catechism*, 125.

³⁴ Belloc, *The Great Heresies*, 97.

was 'reformed' by Calvin; Calvin by Zwingli, and so on. "Once the Catholic principle of *unity of faith* was replaced by the Protestant principle of *purity of faith*, more and more splinter groups or churches formed, each claiming to be more pure and faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ than the other groups."³⁵ Evangelicals Noll and Nystrom wrote, "God, instead of humanity, the reformers asserted, needed to be recognized as the center of the spiritual universe."³⁶ It will be demonstrated in Chapters III and IV that many of the figures responsible for catechetical renewal in the United States would do the converse: humanity instead of God was to become the center of the spiritual universe.

Bokenkotter theorized that all the divisions can be grouped under four headings: "the Lutheran; the sectarians or radicals, who would include the Anabaptists, Quakers, and Baptists; the anti-Trinitarian and rational priests who emphasized critical inquiry as well as mystical faith; and finally the Calvinists."³⁷

Belloc believed that Calvin had the greatest influence on Protestantism.

It is his main doctrines, his attitude toward the universe which has given tone and color to the whole Protestant movement; and though men are affected by the Calvinistic spirit in many various degrees, those who feel it vividly and profoundly to those who only feel it vaguely and superficially, wherever the Protestant type of mind exists it is Calvin at work.³⁸

Under Henry VIII the Church of England resembled the Catholic Church. After his death, the resemblance grew faint. The Puritans, who sought purification from the Roman influence on the Church of England, were heavily influenced by Calvinism.

"By the middle of the seventeenth century the religious quarrel in Europe has been at work, most of the time under arms, for over one hundred and thirty years."³⁹ Under persecution, Catholics and Protestants died rather than deny their faith. In England and on the Continent, Catholics and Protestants fought wars of religion, as did Protestants among themselves.

³⁵ Schreck, *The Compact History*, 67.

³⁶ Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 15.

³⁷ Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 233

³⁸ Hilaire Belloc, *Characters of the Reformation* (Rockford, Ill.: Tan, 1992), 171-72.

³⁹ Belloc, *The Great Heresies*, 122.

Belloc compared the earlier heresies to the Reformation, “the disruption it had produced remained and the main principle – reaction against a united spiritual authority – so continued in vigor as to...launch at last a general doubt, spreading more and more widely.”⁴⁰

Pope Paul III finally convoked the Council of Trent in 1545. There had been some hope for reunification on the part of the Catholic Church, but the divisions were too deep.⁴¹ “So, the Council of Trent began by clarifying and defining exactly what the Catholic Church taught, especially points challenged by Protestantism.”⁴² Each attempt to call the Council was met by one or all of these obstacles: vacillation of the Pope; refusal or at least lack of cooperation on the part of one or several rulers; opposition from Protestants (while some supported a Council); bickering among cardinals and bishops; and squabbling with the pope. It was held over three periods of time,⁴³ during the pontificates of five popes⁴⁴. After the second period of the Council in 1552, it appeared it would not reconvene. Here, as at the Council of Nicea, one man rose to the fore - Charles Borromeo.⁴⁵

Borromeo served as Secretary of State for his uncle Pope Pius IV. He convinced him to re-assemble the Council in 1562. Borromeo was the antithesis of the Protestant Reformers, “... the sincere and zealous reformer will, like Charles, avoid extremes and never overstep the bounds of true reform. He will always be united in the closest bonds with the Church and Christ, her Head.”⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Ibid., 97.

⁴¹ Schreck, *The Compact History*, 71.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Period 1: 1545-1549. Because of the plague in Trent, the Council moved to Bologna in 1547 and remained there until the end of the first period. Period II: 1550-1552, Period III 1562-1563.

⁴⁴ Paul VI 1534-49 (dates denote reign as pope), Julius III 1550-55, Marcellus II 1555 (22 day reign), Paul IV 1555-59, Pius IV 1559-65.

⁴⁵ Charles Borromeo was born into the nobility of Italy in 1528. At an early age he was sent to study both in Milan and Paris and earned doctorates in both civil and canon law. In December 1559, his uncle Angelo de' Medici was elected to ascend to the Chair of St. Peter, becoming Pope Pius IV. At that moment, Charles' life took a dramatic turn. He was appointed administrator of the Papal States, he was then made cardinal deacon, and then became the administrator of the Archdiocese of Milan. In addition to all of this, Charles was also made the Secretary of State. This may seem to reek of nepotism, but Pius IV wanted the best man for all these jobs, and Charles provided the talent and holiness to accomplish all the various duties placed upon his shoulders.

Trent ended in 1563. “The doctrinal definitions they [the Council Fathers] laid down were quite narrow. Not all Catholics agreed with them, but there was no longer any question about the limits of orthodoxy on important issues.”⁴⁷ Pius IV did not live to see the promulgation of all that he worked so hard to achieve.

Pius V (1566-72) succeeded him.⁴⁸ Pessimists thought the reforms of Trent would never take hold, but they did. “One of the main reasons for this was the Roman Popes, who fortunately, for the future of the Church were sincerely dedicated to carrying out the reforms dictated by Trent.”⁴⁹ Schreck noted, “The Spirit of Christ and his good news flowed more freely through the Catholic Church and was evident in both the earthly head of the Church and its members”⁵⁰. However, there was a price to be paid for the reforms of Trent. The Church became less universal. “It had to tighten up its discipline and redefine itself, withdrawing from the world to a degree in order to determine its own life-style and identity.”⁵¹ Schreck also notes that the Church developed a fortress-mentality,⁵² which many believe the Church consistently demonstrated until the Second Vatican Council. Ironically, this era experienced great missionary endeavors as new worlds were being discovered, and old worlds were being evangelized.

After Trent, Borromeo implemented the Council both in his own diocese of Milan, and in the Universal Church. He was responsible for the revision of the Roman Missal, the Breviary, and the final composition and editing of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, or the *Roman Catechism*.⁵³ The Missal and Breviary survived in an almost unchanged form until the Second Vatican Council.

⁴⁶ Pope Pius X, *Editae Saepe* (On St. Charles Borromeo), 29.

⁴⁷ Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 251.

⁴⁸ Pius was member of the Order of Preachers, the Dominicans, whose holy life and strong leadership of this critical time in the Church has been noted by his canonization in 1712. “...he set up such a high standard of papal morality that it has never again suffered any serious relapse. An ascetic, mortified man who loved nothing more than prayer, he transformed the Vatican – by rigorous measures and example-into a kind of monastery” (Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 253).

⁴⁹ Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 253.

⁵⁰ Schreck, *The Compact History*, 95.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that the Apostles’ Creed is the “oldest Roman Catechism” (196).

While Borromeo's work in implementing Trent was important, no one individual led the renewal. In the Preface of the Mass for Holy Men and Women, the Church prays, "You renew the Church in every age by raising up men and women outstanding in holiness, living witnesses of your unchanging love. They inspire us by their heroic lives, and help us by their constant prayers to be the living sign of your saving power."⁵⁴ The age of the Church after the Council was in need of great saints.⁵⁵

Catechism of the Council of Trent

Kevane noted the catechetical significance of the Protestant Reformation—Martin Luther deviated from the deposit of faith, that is, Divine Revelation handed on from Christ to the Church and contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. "...Luther introduced innovational changes in the third Article [of the Creed] regarding the Church, its Magisterium and its Sacraments."⁵⁶ The necessity of a catechism was determined on April 5, 1546. "Eight days later the draft of a decree was read proposing that there be published in Latin and in the vernacular a catechism to be compiled by capable persons for children and uninstructed adults, 'who are in need of milk rather than solid food.'"⁵⁷ However, further discussion was dropped and did not resume until 1562. "According to some the question of the Catechism was brought up by Charles Borromeo during the eighteenth session and a committee actually appointed on February 26, 1562."⁵⁸ The committee was instructed to avoid "the particular opinions of individuals and schools, and to express the doctrine of the universal Church, keeping especially in mind the decrees of the Council of Trent."⁵⁹ The idea of a catechism for children and adults was dropped in favor of a much more

⁵⁴ *Sacramentary of the Roman Missal*, English translations prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1985).

⁵⁵ They were not only leaders in the theological reform, such as the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine, but in evangelical zeal, such as Philip Neri the Apostle of Rome and Edmund Campion who died for his efforts in Elizabethan England; in missionary endeavors, such as Francis Xavier in India and Japan and the North American Martyrs; and in the renewal of the spiritual life, including the Carmelites saints John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, who would be named a Doctor of the Church. St. Francis de Sales used the printing press to lead thousands back to the Church in Geneva and wrote *Introduction to the Devout Life* for the laity, whose needs had been somewhat ignored in the century preceding the Council. St. Vincent de Paul is known for his care of the poor, but also led his community to reform the life of the clergy through the establishment of seminaries. In his care for the poor, he was joined by Louise de Marillac, who founded the Daughters of Charity, a revolutionary new form of religious life for women, who had, for the most part, been cloistered up to that time.

⁵⁶ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xxix.

⁵⁷ John A. McHugh and Charles J. Callan, "Introduction," in *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, issued by order of Pope Pius V, trans. eidem (Manilla, Philippines: Sinag-tala Publishers, Inc., 1971), xxiii.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, xxiv.

extensive manual of catechetical instruction to be used by parish priests in their instruction of the faithful. The final decree on the catechism was passed on November 2, and urged the bishops to have the catechism translated in the vernacular.⁶⁰ The work was not finished at the end of the Council. Borromeo became chair of the committee, and directed both its theological and literary uniformity. Pius V oversaw the completion of the Catechism. “One of his first acts as Pontiff was to appoint a number of theological revisors to examine every statement of the Catechism from the viewpoint of doctrine.”⁶¹ He promulgated the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* in 1566.

The authors reflected on man’s capacity to know God by reason alone. But “guided by its natural lights it never could have known or perceived most of the things by which is attained eternal salvation, the principal end of man’s creation and formation to the image and likeness of God.”⁶² This is a harbinger of discussions during Vatican I and Vatican II on the nature of divine Revelation and man’s response, and of the content of the first articles of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which was promulgated by Pope John Paul in 1992.

The Fathers, therefore, of the General Council of Trent, anxious to apply some healing remedy to so great and pernicious an evil, were not satisfied with having decided the more important points of Catholic doctrine against the heresies of our times, but deemed it further necessary to issue, for the instruction of the faithful in the very rudiments of faith, a form and method to be followed in all churches by those to whom are lawfully entrusted the duties of pastor and teacher.⁶³

⁶⁰ Luther’s catechism was tremendously effective because it was written in German. The *Roman Catechism* was not the first Catholic catechism to be published in the vernacular however.

“Archbishop Thoresby, one of the early proponents of spiritual reform in fourteenth-century England, in his concern for the spiritual welfare of both the clergy and the laity to whom they ministered, issued a *Catechism* expounding upon the fundamentals of faith and practice of the church: the Seven Sacraments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy, and so forth. This *Catechism* appeared both in the simplest of Latin and in English so that even the most unlettered clergy would have no difficulty in transmitting its contents to the laity” (Margaret Emblom, “‘I Herd a Harping from the Hille’: Its Text and Context,” in *Essays in Medieval Studies*, ed. Roberta Bux Bosse, Mark D. Johnston, Robert E. Kendrick, Norman Hinton, David Wagner, online ed., Allen J. Frantzen (<http://www.illinoismedieval.org/ems/emsv1.html>).

⁶¹ McHugh and Callan, “Introduction,” xxv.

⁶² *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 1. In a footnote to his Introduction to *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, Kevane wrote, “It is noteworthy that this basic and authoritative catechetical masterpiece, summing up the heritage of the Catechumenate conducted by Jesus Christ, the Divine Teacher in his Body which is the Church, was out of print and unavailable through normal channels in the United States in the years of catechetical confusion which followed Vatican II” (xxix).

⁶³ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 4.

The authors of the *Catechism* were determined to maintain the integrity of the doctrine of the faith. “These pioneers were intent on the living word of God and a Christocentric approach.”⁶⁴ Its handing on was crucial.

But, having undertaken to instruct pastors and such as have the care of souls in those things that belong peculiarly to the pastoral office and are accommodated to the capacity of the faithful, the Council intended that such things only should be treated of as might assist the pious zeal of pastors in discharging the duty of instruction...⁶⁵

This passage is significant in that it provides, in a sense, a catechetical methodology which desires to hand on the intact teaching of the Church by instruction. This clarity will be demonstrated by Pius X and by Vatican II. It is only after the Council that religious educators deviated from such a position. In addition, the authors understood catechesis as an ecclesial act and part of the pastor’s work. Almost subtly, accommodations were made for the needs of the audience. Kevane wrote “It is clear from this that the Catholic Church refused to be dislodged from the historic primacy of the living catechist, never to be replaced by the various printed and non-printed media invented in the modern age.”⁶⁶ These points will reverberate in the post-Vatican II catechetical Magisterial documents.

In “The Means Required for Religious Instruction”, the authors noted, “Age, capacity, manners and condition must be borne in mind, so that he who instructs may become *all things to all men*, in order that he may be able to gain all in to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:22)...”⁶⁷ They conclude, “...the instruction is to be so accommodated to the capacity and intelligence of the hearers, that, while the minds of the strong are filled with spiritual food, the little ones are not suffered to perish with hunger, asking for bread, while there is *none to break it unto them* (Lamentations 4:4).”⁶⁸ It also desires zeal in communicating Christian knowledge on the part of the instructors, “because it has sometimes to be exercised in expounding matters apparently humble and unimportant, and whose exposition is usually irksome, especially to minds

⁶⁴ *Encyclopedia of Theology, The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 174.

⁶⁵ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 5.

⁶⁶ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xxx.

⁶⁷ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

accustomed to the contemplation of the more sublime truths of religion.”⁶⁹ This desire appears in the post-Vatican II catechetical documents.

The authors encourage those handing on the faith to study the word of God. “Now all the doctrines in which the faithful are to be instructed are contained in the Word of God, which is found in Scripture and tradition.”⁷⁰ In the discussion of the early councils, the reliance on tradition was seen indirectly. It is now abundantly clear. The authors of the *Catechism* are faithful to the desire of the Council that it should follow the decrees and canons of the Council.⁷¹ This refuted Luther’s belief in *Sola Scriptura*- Scripture alone. This emphasis on scripture *and* tradition was encountered again at Vatican I in the constitution *Dei Filius*, and was amplified by Vatican II, in the constitution *Dei Verbum*.

Structure

The structure of the *Catechism* is significant. “Hence, our predecessors in the faith have very wisely reduced all the doctrines of salvation to these four heads: The Apostles’ Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer.”⁷² Kevane observed that the structure of the *Catechism* reflected the heritage of the Ordinary and Universal Magisterium, not only in the content, “but also in its division

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Denziger 783, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1955) Sacred Books and Traditions of the Apostles are Accepted: The sacred and holy ecumenical and general Synod of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit, with the same three Legates of the Apostolic See presiding over it, keeping this constantly in view, that with the abolishing of errors, the purity itself of the Gospel is preserved in the Church, which promised before through the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded “to be preached” by His apostles “to every creature” as the source of every saving truth and of instruction in morals [Matt. 28:19ff., Mark 16:15], and [the Synod] clearly perceiving that this truth and instruction are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, which have been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the apostles themselves, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit, have come down even to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand, [the Synod] following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and holds in veneration with an equal affection of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament, since one God is the author or both, and also the traditions themselves, those that appertain both to faith and to morals, as having been dictated either by Christ’s own word of mouth, or by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession. And so that no doubt may arise in anyone’s mind as to which are the books that are accepted by this Synod, it has decreed that a list of the sacred books be added to this decree.

⁷² *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, 9.

into the four areas of teaching which had been the pattern of the catechumenate since the Apostles.”⁷³

This format can be seen in the early Church. “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”⁷⁴ We see in rudimentary form the Creed—apostle’s teaching; Morality-fellowship; Sacraments-breaking of the bread; and Prayer.⁷⁵

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* was used – albeit in some times and places better than others. Cardinal Newman had seen its importance.

And now, if Protestants wish to know what our real teaching is...let them look, not on our books of casuistry, but at our catechisms...The catechism of the Council of Trent was drawn up for the express purpose of providing preachers with subjects for their Sermons; and, as my whole work has been a defense of myself, I may here say that I rarely preach a sermon, but I go to this beautiful and complete Catechism to get both my matter and my doctrine.⁷⁶

It was consistently held by the Magisterium of the Church as the primary source of catechetical instruction. Pius X exhorted, “The catechetical instruction shall be based on the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*; and the matter is to be divided in such a way that in the space of four or five years, treatment will be given to the Apostles’ Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer and the Precepts of the Church.”⁷⁷

The structure of the *Roman Catechism* is repeated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. John Paul wrote,

⁷³ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xxx.

⁷⁴ Acts 2:41-42 (Revised Standard Version).

⁷⁵ These four “pillars” as they came to be known, are foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Creed: the *Shema* - “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord -Deuteronomy 6:4”⁷⁵; Sacraments: no direct reference appears, but the liturgical life of the Hebrews is clearly delineated in the Old Testament, particularly in the Book of Leviticus. The ultimate liturgical act will become the Passover (Exodus Chapter 12), with the admonition that this feast is to be celebrated every year. “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever” (Exodus 12:14); Morality: The Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments – Exodus Chapter 20; Deuteronomy Chapter 5; Prayer: Prayer is woven throughout the Old Testament. The Psalms provide the most profound example of the prayer life of the Hebrew people.

⁷⁶ John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, ed. Ian Ker (London: Penguin Classics, 1994), 247.

This catechism will thus contain both the new and the old (cf. Mt 13:52), because the faith is always the same yet the source of ever new light.

To respond to this twofold demand, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the one hand repeats the “old,” traditional order already followed by the Catechism of St. Pius V, arranging the material in four parts: the *Creed*, the *Sacred Liturgy*, with pride of place given to the sacraments, the *Christian way of life*, explained beginning with the Ten Commandments, and finally, *Christian prayer*. At the same time, however, the contents are often presented in a “new” way in order to respond to the questions of our age.⁷⁸

He noted the relevance of the structure and its unity.

The four parts are related one to another: the Christian mystery is the object of faith (first part); it is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions (second part); it is present to enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions (third part); it is the basis for our prayer, the privileged expression of which is the *Our Father*, and it represents the object of our supplication, our praise and our intercession (fourth part).⁷⁹

Unfortunately, “In the course of the three centuries which followed, however, the trend of the catechisms was away from the living word of God. Catechism as an institution, no less than the study of the catechism-book, proved to be inadequate to maintain the living word in the Christian community.”⁸⁰

Vatican I

In 1864, the United States was moving into the last year of its Civil War (1861-1865). Europe was embroiled in political and military tensions.⁸¹ Pope Pius IX had been concerned with a liberalism that threatened to undermine the teaching of the Church. There was a movement devoted to the Church that sought to bring a fresher approach to Church teaching. “They looked upon the Church and Church doctrine, not as static

⁷⁷ Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis*, 24.

⁷⁸ John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum*, On the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2.

⁷⁹ John Paul *Fidei Depositum*, 2.

⁸⁰ *Encyclopedia of Theology*, 175.

⁸¹ The European turmoil is too complex to be treated in these pages. As head of the Papal States, a territory much different than today's Vatican City State, the pope was a much more active head of state than at the present. Therefore, his “country” related to other European entities as a political establishment, but this was then complicated by his papal authority over the Universal Church, to which many of the European nations at least in principle, still held allegiance. Pius IX felt strongly about his possession of the Papal States. “If the Lord wants me to lose the Papal States then let him take them away. I cannot hand them over.” (Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, p 316) These complexities would have a grave impact on Vatican I's discussion of papal infallibility.

and unchanging but as alive, dynamic, and developing- like the human body.”⁸²

However, the Pope was concerned that these advances contained elements of the Enlightenment. On December 6, he promulgated a *Syllabus of Errors*.

“Unfortunately, the *Syllabus of Errors* condemned most of the new ideas of the day and gave the impression that the Catholic Church was against everything in the modern world.”⁸³ Undoubtedly, Pius IX wanted people “to remember that God’s revelation of the truth was given assuredly to the Church, not to public opinion nor to the new ideas of scholars.”⁸⁴

Pope Pius IX⁸⁵ expressed his intention to call an ecumenical council at a meeting of the Congregation of Rites. “He manifested to them [only the Cardinals] an idea that had long been in his mind: that it would be for the good of the Church to hold an ecumenical Council, so as to provide in this extraordinary way for the extraordinary needs of the Christian flock.”⁸⁶

⁸² Schreck, *The Compact History*, 95.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Pope Pius IX was beatified by Pope John Paul II on September 3, in the Year of Jubilee 2000. He was beatified along with Pope John XXIII, who promulgated Vatican Council II. Pius’s beatification was not without controversy, especially in regard to Jewish-Christian relations. The words of John Paul II during the beatification ceremony are worth recording here, as they reflect themes that will be discussed throughout this work. “Amid the turbulent events of his time, he was an example of unconditional fidelity to the immutable deposit of revealed truths. Faithful to the duties of his ministry in every circumstance, *he always knew how to give absolute primacy to God and to spiritual values*. His lengthy pontificate was not all that easy and he had much to suffer in fulfilling his mission to the service of the Gospel. He was much loved, but also hated and slandered.

However, it was precisely in these conflicts that the light of his virtues shone brightly, these prolonged sufferings tempered his trust in divine Providence, whose sovereign lordship over human events he never doubted. This was the source of Pius IX’s deep serenity, ever amid the misunderstandings and attacks of so many hostile people. He liked to say to those close to him, ‘In human affairs we must be content to do the best we can and then abandon ourselves to Providence, which will heal our human faults and shortcomings.’

Sustained by this deep conviction, he called the First Vatican Ecumenical Council, which clarified with magisterial authority certain questions disputed at the time, and confirmed the harmony of faith and reason. During his moments of trials Pius IX found support in Mary, to whom he was very devoted. In proclaiming the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, he reminded everyone that in the storms of human life the light of Christ shines brightly in the Blessed Virgin and is more powerful than sin and death. www.vatican.va/holy-father/john-paulii/homilies

⁸⁶ Dom Cuthbert Butler, *The Vatican Council 1869-1970, based on Bishop Ullathorne’s Letters*, ed. Christopher Butler, OSB (London: Longman’s, Green & Co., Ltd, 1930; reprint. London: Collins, 1962) 63. Butler provides a keen analysis of Vatican I by studying the letters of Bishop William Ullathorne, Bishop of Birmingham, England. This resource was chosen because it was written well before Vatican Council II, and therefore is free from any kind of comparison between the two councils. It was also chosen because Ullathorne was a moderate at the Council. Butler writes that he was “aloof from all movements, all intrigues outside the Council Chamber, refusing to act with any party, or to sign any petition, protest, or document whatsoever; yet closely in touch with leading bishops on both sides” (9). This cannot be said of other bishops, including those from the United States. Ullathorne was a friend of Newman.

At his invitation, the Curia pondered the possibility of a council. There were twenty-one responses. “Two were definite negatives, and half a dozen more expressed grave doubts and hesitations as to the prudence, possibility, opportuneness, of holding a Council at the time. The majority pronounced in favour.”⁸⁷ The Council was formally called in 1867, as the Church celebrated the eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Bokenkotter opined, “The impression was given that the purpose of the council would be to rally the Church against the rationalism of the nineteenth century, as the Council of Trent had done against Protestantism in the sixteenth.”⁸⁸ Another battle was brewing. For much of the previous 19th century, political, territorial, theological, and papal battles affected the papacy itself, and its perception in the world at large.

Two groups, the Gallicans and the Ultramontanes, demonstrated different attitudes toward the pontiff and the Vatican. Butler defines the former as “the tendency, while accepting the Papacy as of divine institution, to oppose or minimize the papal claims as they have been made in history. It has been of two kinds: political and theological.”⁸⁹ The political refuted the Pope’s authority in temporal affairs and the theological with religious matters. “Over against the Gallican conception of the Papacy stood what was called the Ultramontane, the conception held ‘over the mountains [the Alps – Rome].’”⁹⁰ In the wake of the Council of Trent, Robert Bellarmine, SJ studied the papacy in *Controversies against the Heretics of our Times*, published in 1586. His teaching concerning the papacy stood fast amidst attempts to mollify the authority of the pope and his teaching. “And it will be seen that the definitions of the Vatican Council [I] on the Pope hardly go beyond Bellarmine’s formulation of the Ultramontane doctrine, and are indeed are practically the same as it...”⁹¹ In effect, Ultramontanism would be synonymous with the papacy, with Rome.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 332.

⁸⁹ Butler, *The Vatican Council 1869-1970*, 27.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁹¹ Ibid., 42. Butler goes on to say that “Since the Vatican Council there is no longer a place for the term ‘Ultramontanism’; because the doctrine of the papacy has, for all in communion with the Holy See, been stamped as Catholicism, much as at Nicea what has been ‘Athanasianism’ was stamped as Catholicism. As the chapters of this paper unfold, there will be cause to disagree with his optimistic appraisal of the affairs of the Church.

Bokenkotter adds "...what counted most in the triumph of ultramontanism was Pio Nono, a man of profound religious faith and total confidence in God, a man absolutely devoted to the interests of the Church."⁹²

The Council was opened on December 8, 1869, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and the anniversary of its promulgation as a dogma by Pius IX in 1854.⁹³ In less than a year much was done. "The First Vatican Council was able to accomplish two far reaching actions, both explicit expressions of concern for the deposit of faith."⁹⁴

While it met, the political situation became volatile. War between France and Prussia seemed imminent. Many bishops had returned home. On July 18, 1870, the remaining bishops met to vote on the doctrine of papal infallibility, the most contested issue of the Council. They were then free to go home, but were to return by November 11. There were hopes that the work of the Council could be carried on, but on July 19, "...Italian history barged in and prevented the continuance of their work. Caught in a war with Prussia, France pulled her troops out of Rome and left the way open for the troops of a united Italy to occupy Rome. This happened on September 20."⁹⁵ Pius regarded himself as a prisoner of the Vatican. His temporal power had come to an end. The Council was suspended indefinitely.

Nonetheless, he was able to promulgate two dogmatic Constitutions. The first, *Dei Filius* (On the Catholic Faith) will be discussed in Chapter II. The second was *Pastor aeternus* (On the Church of Christ). It contained the dogmatic proclamation of papal infallibility, hotly debated at the Council. Bishops from the same country held differing views, in effect it was the Gallicans versus the Ultramontanes. Some of the concern was political. Those American and English bishops⁹⁶ who disagreed with the promulgation of the dogma came from countries in which anti-Catholic sentiment was prevalent, and the Catholic would be perceived as deferring obedience to the head of state to that of the pope.

⁹² Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 331.

⁹³ *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854.

⁹⁴ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xxxiii.

⁹⁵ Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 337

⁹⁶ The Catholic hierarchy in England had been restored only twenty years before.

The promulgation was almost Wagnerian.

The great Session is over. The decree was voted by 533 'placets' to 2 'non placets' amidst a great storm. The lightening flashed into the aula, the thunder rolled over the roof, and glass was broken by the tempest in a window nearly over the pontifical throne and came rattling down. After the votes were given the Pope confirmed it at once, and immediately there was great cheering and clapping from the bishops, and cheers in the body of St. Peter's. Then the 'Te Deum' began, the thunder forming the diapason.⁹⁷

Edward Fitzgerald,⁹⁸ the young Bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas voted *non-placet*.

"At this assembly of Catholic Prelates from around the world, Fitzgerald would earn a place in American and Catholic history by demonstrating immense courage as a man and loyalty as a bishop."⁹⁹ Ullathorne wrote,

Fitzgerald had acted consistently with the Minority [those who disagreed with the proposed dogma], and had voted 'non-placet' on the 13th. He obtained permission to leave, and on the 17th sent a letter to the Secretary that he was going, and professing his intention of following in all things the decrees of Holy Mother Church and the Vatican Council. He changed his mind, however, and came to the Session. As soon as the Pope confirmed the Constitution, he came down from his place and going to the throne professed his acceptance: '*Modo credo, sancte pater*' – 'Now I believe, Holy Father.'¹⁰⁰

"As remarkable as his vote was, it is also noteworthy to observe that Fitzgerald humbled himself enough to submit to the desires and wishes of the Pope and accepted the view of an overwhelming majority of his fellow members of the Catholic hierarchy from all over the world."¹⁰¹ Woods continues, "He also demonstrated his loyalty to the Church and to the Holy Father by immediately submitting so that there would be no scandal or division within the body of Roman Catholicism."¹⁰² The obedience of faith (discussed in *Dei Filius*) is a crucial aspect in later chapters as is faithfulness to the Magisterium (discussed in *Pastor aeternus*). Both these points would be reiterated by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum*.

⁹⁷ Butler, *The Vatican Council 1869-1970*, 416.

⁹⁸ Fitzgerald was ordained Bishop at the age of 34. He had been bishop for two years when he arrived in Rome.

⁹⁹ James M. Woods, *Mission and Memory, A History of the Catholic Church in Arkansas* (Little Rock, Ark.: August House, Inc., 1993), 91.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 414. Riccio of Cajazzo on the Kingdom of Naples was the other 'non-placet'.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 95.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Vatican I proclaimed,

But since in this very age, in which the salutary efficacy of the apostolic duty is especially required, not a few are found who disparage its authority, We deem it most necessary to assert solemnly the prerogative which the Only-begotten Son of God deigned to enjoin with the highest pastoral office. And so We, adhering faithfully to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, to the glory of God, our Savior, the elevation of the Catholic religion and the salvation of Christian peoples, with the approbation of the sacred Council, teach and explain that the dogma has been divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when carrying out the duty of the pastor and teacher of all Christians by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority he defines a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, through the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, operates with that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer wished that His church be instructed in defining doctrine on faith and morals; and so such definitions of the Roman Pontiff from himself, but not from the consensus of the Church, are unalterable.¹⁰³

The Second Vatican Council reiterated this teaching.¹⁰⁴

Vatican II

Divine Revelation, papal infallibility and the nature of the Magisterium of the Church are crucial for catechesis. Kevane looked at Vatican I from a catechetical perspective.

For if there is no transcendent personal God to speak his word by the lips of the divine and eternal Son incarnate, then there is no 'deposit of faith' to hand on by teaching, guarding, and treasuring it by doing so. This would be a direct threat to Catechetics, for quite naturally it would begin to have a different content, a different pattern and form, and even a different purpose in its teaching.¹⁰⁵

It took ninety-two years for the work of Vatican I to be resumed. During this time the map of Europe was reconfigured several times, there was a worldwide depression, two World Wars were fought, Communist regimes controlled Eastern Europe and Asia, African nations sought freedom from European colonization, the world entered the nuclear age, and social upheaval was rampant in the western world.

¹⁰³ Vatican I, *Pastor Aeternus*, Dogmatic Constitution On the Church of Christ, 9 (DS 3074).

¹⁰⁴ "For then the Roman Pontiff is not pronouncing judgment as a private person, but as the supreme teacher of the universal Church, in whom the charism of infallibility of the Church itself is individually present, he is expounding or defending a doctrine of Catholic faith. The infallibility promised to the Church resides also in the body of Bishops, when that body exercises the supreme magisterium with the successor of Peter. To these definitions the assent of the Church can never be wanting, on account of the activity of that same Holy Spirit, by which the whole flock of Christ is preserved and progresses in unity of faith" (*Lumen Gentium* [hereafter, *LG*], 25).

In his first encyclical, Paul VI wrote,

Much progress has been made. Suffice it here to refer to the relevant findings of the First Ecumenical Vatican Council. From these it is obvious that the doctrine concerning the Church is one which must claim the attention not only of pastors but of teachers, but also of the faithful, and indeed all Christians. This doctrine is a necessary stepping-stone to the understanding of Christ and His work. It is precisely because the Second Vatican Council has the task of dealing once more with the doctrine *De Ecclesia* and of defining it, that it has been called the continuation and complement of the First Vatican Council.¹⁰⁶

Vatican II was not convened merely to complete Vatican I. Non-political revolutions were inundating the world in the areas of technology and communication. Man was encountering man in new ways, often at the cost of human dignity. The Church set out to come to grips with this. “This most holy Synod desires to achieve its pastoral goals of renewal within the Church, of the spread of the gospel throughout the world, and of dialogue with the modern world.”¹⁰⁷

While over forty years have passed since the close of the Council, its upheaval continues. Only a few bishops or theologians who participated at the Council are alive at this writing. John Paul II, who had been the youngest bishop at the Council, died at the age of 84 on April 2, 2005. His successor, Pope Benedict XVI, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, was a peritus at the Council. Ratzinger’s successor as the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, American Archbishop William Levada, was ordained to the priesthood the year the Council closed.

Vatican II

Angelo Roncalli was elected Pope in 1958, succeeding Pope Pius XII. It took eleven ballots for his election. Frank Sheed wrote, “He was an old man, evidently he would not last long...He was chosen that the Church might have a short breathing-space, a time to ponder on the problems facing her and plan her course for what was left of the century...Pope John did not last long. But breathing space? We’ve not drawn breath since.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xxxiv.

¹⁰⁶ Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (August 5, 1965), 30.

¹⁰⁷ *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ F. J. Sheed, *Is it the same Church?* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968), vii.

“Pope Pius XII continued the tradition of Popes who wanted to appear as a strong, authoritative force which stood above the world.”¹⁰⁹ He had appeared aloof to many, and history has portrayed him harshly, especially in the last few years, because of his inability to stop the Jewish holocaust. He was a warm man, but very shy, which may have contributed to his aloofness.¹¹⁰ In contrast, John XIII was jolly. “This seventy-six year old man invited friends to dinner, wandered the streets of Rome talking with people, visited hospitals and prisons, and often told jokes and stories that delighted all.”¹¹¹ He said to a friend the day after his election, “I will not remain a prisoner. I am the Bishop of Rome.”¹¹²

His simplicity did not mean he lacked intelligence. He taught Church history in the seminary in Bergamo, and engaged in historical research of his own diocese and of the life of St. Charles Borromeo. He was the national director of the *Propaganda Fide*. He served as papal representative in Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece, earning the respect of the leaders of the Orthodox churches, he became nuncio of France in 1944, the year the allied armies landed on the beaches of Normandy, and he was very active in France’s return to normality after the war. He was named the Cardinal Patriarch in Venice in 1953 and on October 28, 1958, he was elected Pope.

Since the Lord chose me, unworthy as I am, for this great service, I feel I have no longer any special ties in this life, no family, no earthly country or nation, nor any particular preferences with regard to studies or projects, even good ones. Now, more than ever, I see myself only as the humble and unworthy ‘servant of God and servant of the servants of God’. The whole world is my

¹⁰⁹ Schreck, *The Compact History*, 112.

¹¹⁰ Pius XII, as Eugenio Pacelli, as Papal Nuncio to Germany was the Cardinal Protector (a practice that no longer exists) of my Congregation, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, whose Motherhouse is in Germany. Part of our community’s heritage is the story that the Nuncio came to the Motherhouse to consecrate the new church. A red carpet had been place up the center aisle to add to the solemnity of the celebrations. A sign was place on it to keep people from walking on its pristine surface before the ceremonies. A novice rushed into the chapel to remove the sign because she heard the Nuncio had just arrived. She found him tip-toeing up the narrow strip between the carpet and the ends of the pews as he made his way toward the tabernacle for a time of quiet prayer.

¹¹¹ Schreck, *The Compact History* 113. In Bokenkotter’s description of another conciliar papal beati, Pius IX, we find a surprising “kindred-spirit” so to speak. “He quickly broke with the venerable tradition that kept the Pope isolated from the people. He loved to walk around Rome chatting and joking with the people, making little gestures that became legends-like the time he stopped the tears of a little girl who dropped a bottle of wine she was carrying home when he bought her another one and handed it to the surprised child” (330). In his description of Pius he also puts us in touch with another Pope – John Paul II. “His most effective way of reaching the people, however, was through audiences; he was the first modern pope to use them on a grand scale. These often took up his whole day, but they were invaluable for the ultramontane cause since they brought many average Catholics from around the world into personal touch with their Holy Father” (331).

¹¹² Msgr. Loris Capovilla, “The Man-The Priest-His Witness,” in Pope John XXIII, *Journal of a Soul*, trans. Dorothy White (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1980), xxxi.

family. This sense of belonging to everyone must give character and vigor to my mind, my heart and my actions.¹¹³

He decided to call an ecumenical council. On its eve he wrote an encyclical to commemorate the 15th centennial of the death of St. Leo the Great.¹¹⁴ “Venerable Brethren, the time is drawing near for the Second General Council of the Vatican. Surrounding the Roman Pontiff and in close communion with him, you, the Bishops, will present to the world a wonderful spectacle of Catholic unity.¹¹⁵ In addition to honoring Leo, he used the encyclical to “to give the faithful profitable food for thought on the eve of this great event.”¹¹⁶

He desired that the bishops emulate Leo’s fidelity to the unity of the faith “...all teachers of divine truths - all bishops, that is - must necessarily speak with one mind and one voice, in communion with the Roman Pontiff.”¹¹⁷ And he added, “There is, moreover, another essential safeguard of the Church’s visible unity which did not escape that notice of this saintly Pope: that supreme authority to teach infallibly, which Christ gave personally to Peter, the prince of the apostles, and to his successors.”¹¹⁸ He was not a Pope on the brink of “selling out” the 2000 year-old papacy.¹¹⁹

During a spiritual retreat immediately before the opening of the Council, he wrote of the graces given to him. The first was the ability to accept the responsibility of the pontificate. The second concerned the Council.

To have been able to accept as simple and capable of being put into effect certain ideas which were not in the least complex in themselves, indeed perfectly simple, but far-reaching in their effects and full of responsibilities for the future. I was immediately successful in this, which goes to show that one must accept the good inspirations that come from the Lord, simply and confidently.

¹¹³ Pope John XXIII, *Journal of a Soul*, 320-21.

¹¹⁴ He reigned as pope from 440 to 461

¹¹⁵ John XIII, *Aterna Dei Sapientia*, 35.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 44.

¹¹⁹ He closed the encyclical, “We cannot end this Encyclical, Venerable Brethren, without referring once more to Our own and St. Leo’s most ardent longing: to see the whole company of the redeemed in Jesus Christ’s precious blood reunited around the single standard of the militant Church. Then let the battle commence in earnest, as we strive with might and main to resist the adversary’s assaults who in so many parts of the world is threatening to annihilate our Christian faith (ibid., 77).

Without any forethought, I put forward, in one of my first talks with my Secretary of State, on 20 January 1959, the idea of an Ecumenical Council, a Diocesan Synod and the revision of the Code of Canon Law, all this being quite contrary to any previous supposition or idea of my own on this subject. I was surprised at my proposal, which was entirely my own idea. And indeed, after everything seemed to turn out so naturally in its immediate and continued development.

After three years of preparation certainly laborious and but also joyful and serene, we are now on the slopes of the sacred mountain.

May the Lord give us strength to bring everything to a successful conclusion!¹²⁰

Whatever pros and cons he weighed, his journal reveals a man who purely and simply believed that God had called him to this task, and it was given as a grace. This had allowed him to call the Council with confidence. He was eighty-one. He would not live another year. And what did he leave the Church? “The breath of newness he brought certainly did not concern doctrine, but rather the way to explain it; his style and speaking was new, as was his friendly approach to ordinary people and to the powerful of the world. It was in this spirit that he called the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.”¹²¹

John Paul II believed that John convoked the Council to hand on the patrimony of the faith in a fresh way, to meet the new circumstances faced by the Church and the people of the world in the second half of the twentieth century. Expressed simply, Vatican Council II was called for the purposes of *aggiornamento*, calling for spiritual renewal in the Catholic Church, as well as an adaptation of the Church’s teaching and practice, faithful to the “signs of the times.”¹²² “The conciliar renewal or *aggiornamento*¹²³ was designed to enable the Church to renew herself in order to preach Christ in a radically changing world suffering the consequences of alienation

¹²⁰ *Journal of a Soul*, 349.

¹²¹ John Paul II, Homily given at the Beatification of Pius IX, John XXIII, Tommaso Reggio, William Chaminade, and Columba Marmion, September 3, 2000.

¹²² In 1991 former Catholic priest Adrian Hastings mused “Perhaps even the future of the Church may be judged providential, but in such a story Vatican II will appear as the final occasion when Christianity was at the centre of significance for human and religious history, and John Paul II will be judged not the healer of a divided Church, but the gravedigger of Pope John’s *aggiornamento*” (“Catholic History from Vatican I to John Paul II,” in *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*, ed. idem (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 12.

¹²³ John chose the Italian word for renewal or updating to describe the intended work of the Council. “*Aggiornamento* was intended to signify a new way of presenting the faith to the world so that it can be understood and accepted more readily and has become the central word for the spirit to be found in the

from God.”¹²⁴

Renewal was not a concept original to John XXIII. John O’Malley, in his study of the Church after Trent, stated that personal conversion or reform is one of the most consistent themes of scripture, but that the desire for institutional reform was already present in the patristic period. Nonetheless, he believed that, “Not until the Investiture Controversy of the eleventh century, however, that the idea clearly emerged that the church itself, as a corporation, might be subject to reform and, indeed, require it.”¹²⁵

John, who had been suffering from cancer of the stomach, became seriously ill shortly after the close of the first session of the Council. He died on June 3, 1963. He was succeeded by Giovanni Montini, Archbishop of Milan. Pope Paul VI reconvened the Council on September 29, 1963.¹²⁶

Implementation of the Council

In his first encyclical, Paul discussed his plan for his pontificate. The first point concerned the Church’s self-awareness:

...to ponder the mystery of its own being, and draw enlightenment and inspiration from a deeper scrutiny of the doctrine of its own origin, nature, and destiny. The doctrine is already known...It is a storehouse of God’s hidden counsels which the Church must bring to light. It is a doctrine which more than any other is arousing the expectation and attention of every faithful follower of Christ, and especially of men like us, Venerable Brethren, whom ‘the Holy Spirit has appointed to rule the very Church of God’.¹²⁷

He then stressed that renewal would be the inevitable result of this self-awareness.

We have in mind at this time: to bring the members of the Church to a clearer realization of their duty to correct their faults, strive for perfection, and make a

actual implementation of the decrees and documents of the Church” (*Encyclopedia of Catholic History*, ed. Mathew Bunson [Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1995], 37.)

¹²⁴ Bernard Law, “Introduction,” in *The Extraordinary Synod 1985 – Message to the People of God* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1985), 13.

¹²⁵ John O’Malley, *Trent and All That* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 17.

¹²⁶ Montini had served both Pius XII and John XXIII, particularly in preparations for the Council. He brought new innovations to the Council, for which John XXIII often receives the credit: the admission of laymen to the proceedings, admission of women religious, including American Sister of Loretto Mary Luke Tobin (who died in 2006), and the establishment of a press office. He became the first widely traveled Pope, journeying to Jerusalem, New York, Bombay, Bogota, Fatima, Uganda, Australia, and the Philippines, where an attempt was made on his life.

¹²⁷ *Ecclesiam Suam*, 9

wise choice of the means necessary for achieving the renewal we spoke of.¹²⁸

His final desire concerned the relationship of the Church with the surrounding world.

Since 1965, many, many people have spent a great deal of time and effort discussing the ramifications of the Second Vatican Council. “Six hundred million Catholics have asked themselves what happened? And the rest of Christendom would like to know.”¹²⁹

Philip Gleason reviewed the literature produced by American theologians and Church historians from 1950-1980. He compiled a list of themes he felt were prevalent in American Catholic life in those years. He ascertained that the pre-conciliar themes were Catholic mobilization and anti-ghettoism, anti-ghettoism being a reaction to Catholic mobilization, which was directed inwards. In the early sixties John F. Kennedy and John XXIII reflected a new spirit: the President reflecting the theme of Catholic participation in American life,¹³⁰ the Pope representing the new spirit in the Church, bringing European thought to America through the Council.

The immediate post-conciliar themes included continuation and modernization of earlier themes, with a new look at the future of Catholic schools and Catholic intellectual life; the sociological analysis of religion. The themes of the mid and late sixties included controversies over Catholic education, parochial and higher, and “the field of catechetics was undergoing drastic reconsideration. “Gabriel Moran,¹³¹ one of the most prominent American [catechetical] leaders, had reached the conclusion by the late 1960’s that ‘the problem of catechetics is that it exists’, as he put it in his *Design for Religion*.”¹³² Another theme focused on freedom, authority, honesty, secularity, and sex. A third was angry priests, restless nuns, and charismatic lay folk. And the fourth was Catholicism and general cultural upheaval. He then listed some new interests of the 70’s: a new ethnicity; the civil rights and the anti-Vietnam

¹²⁸ Ibid., 11

¹²⁹ John A. Hardon, *Christianity in the Twentieth Century* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1972), 203.

¹³⁰ While Kennedy’s Catholicism was an issue for much of the population of the United States, his own practice of the faith was nominal.

¹³¹ Moran’s work will be looked at in detail in Chapter III.

¹³² New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

movements of the 60's sparked sympathy for the Third World, liberation theology, promotion of peace and justice, and the desire for a Christian socialism as a political-economic reform. Gleason notes that woman's liberation was also fueled by liberation theology. Abortion rights replaced birth control as the central Catholic moral issue.¹³³

At the Extraordinary Synod marking the 20th anniversary of Vatican II, the bishops commented on the post-conciliar Church.

Nonetheless, although great fruits have been obtained from the Council, we have at the same time recognized, with great sincerity, deficiencies and difficulties in the acceptance of the Council. In truth, there certainly have also been shadows in the post-conciliar period: in part due to an incomplete understanding and application of the Council, in part to other causes. However, in no way can it be affirmed that everything which took place after the Council was caused by the Council.¹³⁴

Christopher Derrick referred to the time after the Council as the "cult of change", and felt that it was the new orthodoxy.¹³⁵ It is the thesis of this writer that part of the problem in the implementation of the Council was caused by a lack of explanation, really a lack of catechesis, on the changes, especially those of Catholic practice. This was experienced personally, and has been made clear in anecdotal reminiscences gathered from catechists throughout the United States and Canada. Personal recollections include accepting whatever change occurred because it was "according to Vatican II."

Joan Chittister, OSB, offered her own summary of what often happened in parishes in the years immediately following the Council.

Most pastors, formed in another council themselves, gave few homilies on the subject and even fewer programs. Lay people were left to cope with change altar rail by altar rail, hymn by hymn, liturgy by liturgy. There were few explanations given, little theology taught. Parishes simply implemented new formulas, accepted nuns in new habits – grudgingly in many places – said

¹³³ Philip Gleason, "A Browser's Guide to American Catholicism 1950-1980," *Theology Today*, 38 (1981), 378ff.

¹³⁴ "Synod of Bishops Final Report," in *The Extraordinary Synod 1985*, 37.

¹³⁵ Christopher Derrick, *Trimming the Ark, Catholic Attitudes and the Cult of Change* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), 9.

prayers in new translations, and watched in sullen sadness or deep resentment as the church they had known faded into oblivion.¹³⁶

It was true in Europe as well. Fournier referenced a report to the Plenary Assembly of the French episcopate in 1968, in which the bishops were told that “The present mutations [in Catholic identity] have also produced so many landslides in our cultural bedrock that there too the answers given until quite recently are no longer meaningful.”¹³⁷ He remarked that the result of this confusion has resulted in the phenomena that in regard to the essentials of life in the Church and its expression, parents cannot grasp their children’s religious questions, the parish priest does not understand his curate, the curate does not want to be a curate, and young nuns no longer understand the language of institutions or authority.¹³⁸

Responses

Generally speaking, the reactions to the Council can be placed in four groups.

Response #1

There were those whose security in the Catholic Church came from devotional exercises and disciplinary practices. When these practices (women wearing hats in Church; abstaining from meat on Fridays; Marian devotions, particularly the Rosary) fell by the wayside they were left with bruised religious psyches.

Some Catholics found that they could not remain in a Church that “changed everything.” Others fought tenaciously to hold on to the external practices not to become holier but to hang onto the “Church that was.” Anecdotal research of such Catholics¹³⁹ found story after story of families who would drive or even move to the next state to find a “conservative” parish, or a Latin Mass. Others reverted to home-schooling to protect their families from the dangers of the post-conciliar Church and community, maintaining a siege mentality that was itself opposed to the notion that

¹³⁶ Joan Chittister, OSB, “The Struggle Between Confusion and Expectation: The Legacy of Vatican II” in *Vatican II Forty Personal Stories*, ed. William Madges and Michale J. Daley (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 2003), 28.

¹³⁷ The report was made by Bishop Schmitt of Metz and Bishop Matagrin, Auxiliary of Lyons. Quoted in Francois Fournier, SJ, “An Urgent Task: The Permanent Formation of Faith,” in *Lumen Vitae* 26 (1971): 35.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹³⁹ I travel extensively to offer seminars and workshops on catechesis. At each venue, I ask the participants to share with me their memories of the Council and the post-Conciliar Church.

the "...Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, to bring the light of Christ to all men..."¹⁴⁰

These people would be labeled "conservative." Many accepted the appellation as self-descriptive. Other preferred the term "traditionalist." Often their opinions are reflected in or shaped by *The Wanderer*.¹⁴¹

This group also had extremists. There were those who were so resistant to the Council, that they called the validity of the Council into question. The Council of Trent remained the benchmark for renewal in the Church. The rejection of the Council by Swiss Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his followers remains a tragedy in the aftermath of a council that was filled with hope.¹⁴² Lefebvre "sought to appeal to earlier councils in order to discredit Vatican II. But that which guarantees the truth and teaching of one Council guarantees the truth of them all."¹⁴³

Response #2

There were also those who either thought that the Council did not change enough and took it upon themselves renew the Church, or disagreed entirely with the teaching of the Church in matters of faith or morals.¹⁴⁴ "Some seized the right to go *far* beyond those. It was as though some took the Church to be dis-incarnate, detached from flesh and history – detached that is from Rome and the Vatican, and so far as possible from

¹⁴⁰ LG, 1.

¹⁴¹ *The Wanderer* has been providing its readers with news and commentary from an orthodox Catholic perspective for over 135 years. From vital issues affecting the Catholic Church to the political events which threaten our Catholic faith *The Wanderer* is at the forefront every week with its timely coverage and its cutting edge editorials. <http://www.thewandererpress.com/> 11/18/06.

¹⁴² Archbishop Lefebvre, a participant at the Council, refused to sign the final versions of The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the Declaration on Religious Liberty. He spent the years after the Council refuting it and refusing to comply with its decisions, particularly in the liturgy. Finally on June 30, 1988 he ordained bishops without Vatican approval, despite canonical warnings and the paternal efforts on the part of Pope John Paul II to keep him from doing so. In the Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei*, dated July 2, 1988, John Paul II stated that the act "was one of *disobedience* to the Roman Pontiff in a very grave matter and of supreme importance for the unity of the church, such as the ordination of bishops whereby the apostolic succession is sacramentally perpetuated. Hence, such disobedience- which implies in practice the rejection of the Roman primacy- constitutes a Roman Act (3)." As had his predecessor, Pope Benedict desires the reconciliation of this group to Church.

¹⁴³ Ralph M. McNerny, *What Went Wrong with Vatican II* (Manchester, N.H.: Sophia Institute Press, 1998), 33.

¹⁴⁴ The most prominent of these have been theologians Hans Küng and Charles Curran, both Catholic priests silenced by the Vatican, and forbidden to teach theology at any Catholic institution.

any concrete local authority. Detached, too, from past tradition and the painful lessons of the past.”¹⁴⁵

In 1968, Pope Paul VI noted this tendency in the introductory paragraphs of *The Creed of the People of God*.

In making this profession, we are aware of the disquiet which agitates certain groups of men at the present time with regard to the faith. They do not escape the influence of a world being profoundly changed, in which so many truths are being denied outright or made objects of controversy. We see even Catholics allowing themselves to be seized by a kind of change and novelty.¹⁴⁶

He acknowledged the Church has always encouraged study of her teaching, but warned that “...at the same time the greatest care must be taken, while fulfilling the indispensable duty to research, to do no injury to the truths of Christian doctrine. For that would be to give rise, as is unfortunately seen in these days, to disturbance and doubt in many faithful souls.”¹⁴⁷

Sheed wryly observed, “We have Catholics writing of the decisions of Vatican II like professors marking examination papers, with C plus the highest mark they can find it intellectually honest to give...I get the feeling that the Pope isn’t infallible and the Council isn’t, but half the Catholics I meet are.”¹⁴⁸

Speaking of the Constitution on the Liturgy, liturgist Nathan Mitchell wrote, “The council did not ‘renew’, ‘retool’, ‘return’, ‘reform’, ‘redesign’, ‘refurbish’, or ‘rehabilitate’ the liturgy; it reinvented it.”¹⁴⁹ He credits John XXIII for this. Paul VI is not mentioned. He used the phrase, “they decided” many times. The Council fathers did indeed make decisions, but maintained “In order that sound tradition be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress, a careful investigation – theological, historical, and pastoral – should always be made into each part of the

¹⁴⁵ Michael Nowak, “The Rescue of Vatican II” in *Vatican II Forty Personal Stories*, 32, excerpted from new Introduction to the Transaction edition of *The Open Church* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 2001).

¹⁴⁶ Paul VI, *The Creed of the People of God*, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Sheed, *Is it the same Church?*, 6.

¹⁴⁹ Nathan Mitchell, “Forty Years Since Vatican II” in *Continuing the Journey* Bill Huebsch, General Editor, (Allen, TX: Thomas More, 2002, year), 27. At the time his article was published, Mitchell was serving as the Associate Director for research at Notre Dame University’s Center for Pastoral Liturgy.

liturgy which is to be revised.”¹⁵⁰ They concluded, “Finally there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them, and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing.”¹⁵¹

In reading the Constitution itself, many considerations fueled the process of “deciding”:

- “In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself.”¹⁵²
- “For the liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These latter not only may be changed but ought to be changed with the passage of time, if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become less suitable.”¹⁵³
- Texts and rites should be drawn up so as to express more clearly the holy things which they signify.¹⁵⁴
- The Christian people, as far as is possible, should be able to understand them with ease and take part in them fully, actively, and as community.¹⁵⁵

Schreck writes “The sad fact is that many Catholics have simply not read the documents of Vatican II, so they are prey to vague impressions or inaccurate interpretations of the Council’s teaching. Even Catholic theologians have been known to censor or distort passages of the Council documents.”¹⁵⁶

Mitchell generously quotes John XXIII and commentators on the Council, but sparingly quotes from the Council itself. These are often out of context and focus on the lay participation in the liturgy rather than the union of the ordained priesthood with the union of the priesthood of all believers. “The council insisted that the assembly is the subject –the agent- of the liturgical act, not its object.”¹⁵⁷ The Council

¹⁵⁰ *Sacrosanctum concilium* (hereafter, *SC*), 23.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Schreck, *The Catholic Challenge* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Publications, 1991), 72.

¹⁵⁷ Mitchell, “Forty Years Since Vatican II,” 27.

does emphasize that by reason of their baptism, the faithful undertake “full, conscious, and active participation”¹⁵⁸ in the liturgy. He omits,

The liturgy, then, is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. It involves the presentation of man’s sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs. In it full public worship is performed by the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and its members.¹⁵⁹

The Council states that Christ is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass in the ministry of priests, is especially present in the Eucharistic species, present in the sacraments- it is Christ who baptizes, is present in the word – he speaks when the scriptures are read in Church, and he is present when the Church sings and prays.¹⁶⁰ Mitchell failed to include this preeminence of Christ in the liturgy. He misinterprets the liturgy with the Church, and opines that the council “didn’t merely change the way we worship it radically redefined the church.”¹⁶¹ Man becomes the center of the liturgy.

In practice, those who either constructed or followed such notions would be called “liberals”. Often they preferred the term “progressive” in referring to themselves. Popularly, much of their thinking is found in or shaped by *The National Catholic Reporter*.¹⁶² Novak opined that, “Within a decade of the end of the Council, every major institution in the American Church and in many others was dominated by the progressives, under the sway of ‘the spirit of Vatican II.’”¹⁶³ St. John was also concerned with progressives, “Anyone who is so ‘progressive’ as not to remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God; whoever remains in the teaching has the Father and the Son.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ SC, 14.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 5.

¹⁶¹ Mitchell, “Forty Years Since Vatican II,” 28: “No longer could the church be identified with a small celibate cadre of religious professionals who sip espresso each morning, eat substantial quantities of pasta for lunch, and nap most of the afternoon. No longer could the Church be confused with a good-old-boy network of curial careerists who make rules for others about marriage and sex, when their own ethics couldn’t be detected with the aid of a particle accelerator. No longer could the church be confused with an essentially secular, shameless institution that grabs power, beats and berates its critics, and cannibalizes its best and brightest.”

¹⁶² *National Catholic Reporter* is an independent newsweekly that is frequently the first to report on serious issues important to thinking Catholics and the first place to find open, honest and ongoing discussion of those issues... Founded in 1964, *NCR* has earned a reputation for fearless, balanced writing on a wide range of topics: spirituality, human rights, living the faith, social justice, catholic trends and liturgical developments. <http://ncronline.org/mainpage/about.htm>.

¹⁶³ Michael Novak, “The Rescue of Vatican II,” 32.

¹⁶⁴ 2 John 9 (NAB).

In his biography of John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*, George Weigel commented on these first two groups as he discussed the Extraordinary Synod called to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Council.

A 'progressive' party in the Church, thinking Vatican II old hat, was busy imagining a Vatican III that would complete the rout of traditional Catholicism which it somehow thought to be John XXIII's intention in summoning the Council. Another party (usually termed 'traditionalists') believed that Vatican II and its ill-advised 'opening' to the modern world were responsible for the crisis of Catholic life since 1965.¹⁶⁵

He makes an important point that will be seen in the direct discussion of post-conciliar catechesis. "Neither party seemed terribly concerned with the historical continuity of the Church as the embodiment of a living tradition."¹⁶⁶ In his first Christmas address to the Roman Curia, Pope Benedict XVI addressed this issue. The speech was given as the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the close of Vatican II was coming to an end. He asked the question, "Why has the implementation of the Council, in large parts of the Church, thus far been so difficult? ...The problems in its implementation arose from the fact that two contrary hermeneutics came face to face and quarreled with each other."¹⁶⁷ The first hermeneutic that he describes is the

... 'hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture'; it has frequently availed itself of the sympathies of the mass media, and also one trend of modern theology. On the other hand there is the 'hermeneutic of reform', of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God. This hermeneutic of discontinuity 'risks ending in a split between the pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church'.¹⁶⁸

How could a single event produce such polarities? In an article in the *National Catholic Reporter's* edition that celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of

¹⁶⁵ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John II* (New York: Cliff Street Books/HarperCollins, 1999): 487.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Benedict XVI, Christmas Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia, www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/doc, December 22, 2005.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

the Vatican II, Weigel describes his personal experience in the 1970's, which matches that of this writer.¹⁶⁹

But in my undergraduate and graduate education, at least, one didn't wrestle with the texts of the council itself. I expect the experience was replicated in parishes and on diocesan committees across the United States: The actual texts of the Council got short shrift, as battalions of theologians and "consultants" and facilitators and what-not worked overtime to implement a council whose documents were not widely read, and were even less carefully studied.¹⁷⁰

Response #3

Next, there were those who were indifferent to the Council. There are and have always been Catholics whose practice of the faith is merely habitual. They have neither an opinion concerning the Council nor a desire to know anything about it. They accepted the "changes" of the Council as a matter of course.

There are others who, at the outset, may seem to belong to this group, but who, in reality, are not indifferent but were obedient to whatever changes took place in their parish, authentic or inauthentic, assuming they were from the Council. Their obedience to their pastor or bishop could be deemed virtuous. This was the most frequent response reported anecdotally.

Response #4

Finally, there was a significant group of clerics, academics, and members of the "rank and file", who were involved in disseminating the aims of the Council to guarantee a more faithful response to its tenets. They understood the Council as a reflection of Pope John XXIII's desire to renew the Catholic Church so that her members could become holy while living and acting in a world that had seen more rapid change than any other period of history. To that group, the documents and decrees of the Second Vatican Council became a roadmap for the practical, spiritual, and liturgical aspects of life. Some would call them "conservative" or "traditionalist." Many would prefer to be called "orthodox".

¹⁶⁹ In my four years of study to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Theology from St. Louis University, no Second Vatican Council document was required reading, nor were any discussed in any classes that I attended.

¹⁷⁰ George Weigel, "Grateful for Vatican II, even when we 'get it wrong,'" *National Catholic Reporter*, October 4, 2002.

In General

For all groups and for those individuals who perhaps may become syncretistic post-Conciliar Catholics who take from each group that which “feels like a fit,” the Second Vatican Council was the preeminent event in the Roman Catholic Church of the twentieth century. In his call for the Extraordinary Synod, John Paul II stated:

Vatican Council II remains the fundamental event in the life of the contemporary Church. It was fundamental to the deepening of the wealth entrusted to her by Christ. In her and through her, He extends and imparts to mankind the *mysterium salutis*, the mystery of salvation, the work of redemption. It was fundamental for fruitful contact with the contemporary world for the purpose of evangelization and dialogue at all levels and with all people of upright conscience.¹⁷¹

As has been seen, the “spirit of the council” is credited for every innovation, reform, or renewal that has taken place in the Church during the past forty years.

Aggiornamento is simply interpreted as change rather than renewal.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) is, by any reasonable standard of measurement, one of the most significant events in the entire history of the Church, and perhaps the most important single religious event of this century. One should expect, therefore, that the quarter-century immediately following the council would have been a time of profound and far-reaching change.¹⁷²

And this change often facilitated uproar, discontent, dissatisfaction, disunity and disillusionment.

Rosemary Haughton’s oft-quoted characterization of Vatican II as that ‘superbly destructive Council’ suggests the turbulence it engendered. Volumes were written on the ‘changing church’ and the precise character of change-how extensive it should be and how it ought to take place-did indeed seem to be the crux of the matter.¹⁷³

Pope John Paul II looked at the Council from a different perspective. To implement the Council in his own diocese of Krakow, he had written *Sources of Renewal*, “The implementation of Vatican II, or the process of Conciliar renewal, must be based on the principle of enrichment of faith.”¹⁷⁴ “It would be a mistake not to consider the

¹⁷¹ John Paul II, “Call for the Extraordinary Synod,” in *The Extraordinary Synod 1985*, 19.

¹⁷² Richard P. McBrien, *Report on the Church, Catholicism After Vatican II* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), Introduction.

¹⁷³ Mary C. Boys, *Educating in Faith* (Lima, Oh.: Academic Renewal Press, 1989), 89.

¹⁷⁴ Karol Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal, The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 15.

implementation of Vatican II as the response of faith to the word of God as it proceeded from that Council.”¹⁷⁵

Dickens could have been referring to the Council when he wrote,

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.¹⁷⁶

While Dickens was referring to the era of the French Revolution, a time fraught with violence, murder and martyrdom, some members of the Church who have lived in the post-conciliar Church may feel as if they had gone through martyrdom, albeit unbloody. This was alluded to in the previously quoted remarks of George Weigel.

Richard John Neuhaus, a Lutheran scholar who later entered into full communion with the Catholic Church, described this from the perspective of a non-Catholic.

Neuhaus states,

In the years since Vatican II few dispute the proposition that there is a “crisis” in Roman Catholicism. The church’s leaders carefully insist that, while the crisis erupted *after* the Council, it is not *because* of the Council. In an ecumenical context it can be more candidly acknowledged that the Council undoubtedly contributed to the crisis....For some the crisis is all catastrophe, for others, it is all opportunity, and yet others view it as the normal aftermath of a transformative event in the church’s history.¹⁷⁷

Catechetics and the Council

Catechetics, as a discipline and as an apostolate, was deeply impacted by the Council, even though, curiously, it says almost nothing specifically about catechesis except for the Decree on Bishops. It can be determined, however, that the Council was indeed catechetical. This is evident in John XXIII’s address to the priests of Rome in March, 1962.

The success of this Ecumenical Council will lie in the restoration and renewal of Universal Church. This renewal is summarized in three points, a restored

¹⁷⁵ Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 11.

¹⁷⁶ Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 13.

¹⁷⁷ Richard John Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment, The Paradox of the Church in the Postmodern World* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987), 69.

fervor of religious devotion; an extensive and deep renewal of catechetical teaching; and thus a noble, model and apostolic Christian life.¹⁷⁸

He made the point again as he convoked the Council.

These fruits that we expect so much from the Council, and on which we like so often to dwell, entail a vast program of work which is now being prepared. This concerns the doctrinal and practical problems which correspond more to the requirements of perfect conformity with Christian teaching, for the edification and in the service of the Mystical Body and of its supernatural mission, and therefore, the sacred books, venerable tradition, the sacraments, prayer, ecclesiastical discipline, charitable and relief activities, the lay apostolate, and mission horizons.¹⁷⁹

He made the point again as he opened the Council.

The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this, that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously...The salient point of the Council is not, therefore a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church...which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all. For this a Council was not necessary...it is necessary that this unchangeable doctrine, to which the obedience of Faith must be given, be studied thoroughly and explained in the way for which our times are calling. For the Deposit of Faith in itself, namely the truths which form the content of our venerable doctrine, is one thing, and the way it is expressed is another thing, *eodem tamen sensu eademque sententia*, but nevertheless with the same meaning and the same sense.¹⁸⁰

There are many who construed that since it was not concerned with promulgating new dogmas, the Council was simply pastoral and not catechetical. John XXIII echoes Paul's words to Timothy, "Guard what has been entrusted to you."¹⁸¹ The Council clarified the deposit of faith in *Dei Verbum*. "Sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which it entrusted to the Church."¹⁸² It also clarified the Church's relation to the deposit. "...the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ."¹⁸³ In Vatican Council II, the Magisterium of the Church acted in a manner designated as the

¹⁷⁸ John XXIII, "L'incontro coi parroci," AAS (March 31, 1962).

¹⁷⁹ John XXIII, "Humanae Salutis," in *Documents of Vatican II*, ed Abbot (New York: Guild Press, 1966) 706.

¹⁸⁰ John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, AAS (November 26, 1962)

¹⁸¹ 1Tm 6:20.

¹⁸² *Dei Verbum* (hereafter *DV*), 12.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*.

“extraordinary Magisterium.”¹⁸⁴

The General Catechetical Directory

On Easter Sunday, 1971, the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy¹⁸⁵ promulgated the *General Catechetical Directory*, in accord with the directive given in the *Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church*.

A special directory should also be compiled concerning the pastoral care of certain groups of the faithful according to the various circumstances of different countries and regions, and also a directory for the catechetical instruction of the Christian people in which the fundamental principles of this instruction and its organization will be dealt with and the preparation of books dealing with it.¹⁸⁶

“Considerable time was spent in the preparation of this document, not only because of the difficulties involved in a work of this sort, but also because of the method which was used in producing it.”¹⁸⁷

In May of 1966, international representatives formed the commission to begin the actual work on the proposed *Directory*.¹⁸⁸ In 1967, a questionnaire was sent to the Bishops' Conferences throughout the world. Their answers would provide the foundation for the *Directory* itself. At the conclusion of the May meeting, members were assigned papers to be prepared in collaboration with individuals who were experts in theology, liturgy, and Scripture in the respective countries of the

¹⁸⁴ “The Church's teaching office exercised in a solemn way, as in formal declarations of the Pope or of ecumenical councils of bishops approved by the Pope.” Hardon, 238

¹⁸⁵ Known before the Vatican II as the Congregation for the Council, it was one of the sources of renewal after the Council of Trent. It is responsible for catechetics. The Catechetical Office of the Congregation provides for the religious formation of the faithful of all ages and states of life; it issues appropriate norms so that catechetical teaching is imparted in a suitable fashion; it ensures that catechetical formation is properly executed; it grants the prescribed approvals for national Catechisms and Directories; it assists catechetical offices and follows initiatives regarding religious formation and international events dealing with such issues; it coordinates activities and offers their help if necessary.

¹⁸⁶ Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus* (October 28, 1965), 44.

¹⁸⁷ *GDC*, Foreword.

¹⁸⁸ Representatives were from Upper Volta, Paraguay, Vatican City, France, Canada, Germany and Italy. There were no representatives from India or Asia. Msgr. Russell J. Neighbor, Director of the National CCD, Washington, DC, was the American representative.

representatives. The collaborators from the United States included Brother Gabriel Moran, “who worked jointly on the Magisterium and Tradition.”¹⁸⁹

A draft was submitted to the Congregation for the Clergy and revised. It was submitted again to the Bishops for their response. After compilation of the responses, the final copy of the document was written and promulgated.¹⁹⁰ Such collegiality on a magisterial document was rare.¹⁹¹

For the first time in the history of the Church, an official document was drawn up by the Magisterium to discuss the process of handing on the faith. This does not mean, of course, that the Church did not hand on the faith before this time or develop means to do so. Since the time of the Gospels, the Church has taken great care to “guard the deposit.”¹⁹² As has been noted, compendia of Church teaching have been compiled, such as the Apostles’ Creed and the *Didache*¹⁹³. The writings of the Fathers of the Church provide a virtual library devoted to Catholic theology and pastoral practice. The homily was also used to hand on the faith especially in the catechumenate. *The Jerusalem Catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem* is a prime example of a collection of catechumenal and mystagogical homilies. St. Anthony of Padua, Doctor of the Church and first Franciscan theologian,¹⁹⁴ was gifted in handing on the faith through the homily. On the occasion of the eighth centenary of Anthony’s birth, John Paul II wrote, “All his preaching was a constant and tireless proclamation of the Gospel *sine*

¹⁸⁹ *Living Light*, editorial, 6 (1969): 5. The other collaborators were: Bernard Cooke, SJ Marquette University; Kevin Seasoltz, OSB, Catholic University of America; Rev. Eugene Maly, Mt. St. Mary’s Seminary, Ohio; Mary Perkins Ryan.

¹⁹⁰ April 11, 1971, under the direction of the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, John J. Cardinal Wright, an American.

¹⁹¹ Pope Pius XI had consulted the Bishops about catechetics. The results helped to make up the body of the document *On Better Care for Catechetical Teaching, Provided Sane*, issued by the Catechetical Office of the Holy See, under Pope Pius XI, on January 12, 1935.

¹⁹² 1 Timothy 6:20.

¹⁹³ The *Didache* in English is entitled *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. Its dating is the late first or early second century. “The *Didache* is divided into three parts: 1. the Two Ways, the Way of Life, and the Way of Death; 2. a liturgical training manual treating of baptism, fasting, confession, and Holy Communion; 3. a treatise on the ministry. Doctrinal teaching is presupposed.” Hardon, 158.

¹⁹⁴ Francis of Assisi was cautious in allowing his friars to study, believing that it would destroy the humility he desired in his Friars Minor. In Anthony, he saw both scholarship and humility. He gave his permission: “To Brother Anthony, my teacher, Brother Francis sends his greetings. It is my pleasure that you teach theology to the brethren, provided however, that as the Rule prescribes, the spirit of prayer and devotion not be extinguished. Farewell.” *English Omnibus of the Sources of the Life of St. Francis*, Marion A. Habig, ed. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), 164.

glossa. A true, courageous and clear proclamation. Through preaching he found the way to kindle faith in souls, to purify, console and strengthen them.”¹⁹⁵

The homily was not sufficient in handing on the faith. “Whereas the sermon is limited to certain definite occasions, takes up and evaluates certain definite points of doctrine and through them seeks to keep alive and to develop Christian life, catechesis furnishes a basic introduction to the whole of Christian doctrine.”¹⁹⁶

In the Middle Ages, another way of catechizing developed. Methods were devised to aid in the task of committing Church doctrine to memory because the majority of people were illiterate and books were expensive. “As is common in oral culture the Middle Ages put great premium on lists, word associations, verse and other aids to memorization. The *septenarium*, for example was a genre that catalogued doctrines and practices in groups of seven.”¹⁹⁷ By the 13th century, homilies were recognized again for their service to the catechetical training of the people. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decreed,

Wherefore we decree that bishops provide suitable men, powerful in work and word, to exercise with fruitful result the office of preaching, who in place of the bishops, since these cannot do it, diligently visiting the people committed to them, may instruct them by word and example. And when they are in need, let them be supplied with the necessities, lest for want of these they may be compelled to abandon their work at the very beginning.¹⁹⁸

After the Reformation, the catechism became popular as a medium for catechizing. In addition to the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Jesuits Robert Bellarmine and Peter Canisius wrote catechisms, including versions meant for children or for those who had difficulty learning. These catechisms reveal the desire to accommodate so that all the faithful could receive the faith.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ John Paul II, On the Occasion of the Eighth Centenary of St. Anthony of Padua’s Birth, June 13, 1994.

¹⁹⁶ Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith*, xi.

¹⁹⁷ Berard Marthaler, *The Catechism Yesterday and Today: The Evolution of a Genre* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 10.

¹⁹⁸ Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 10.

¹⁹⁹ An interesting exception has been religious instruction of the deaf. While the Church has always cared for people with disabilities, for centuries she did not instruct the deaf, taking literally Paul’s proclamation that, “Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The great counter reformer St. Francis de Sales had a servant named Martin who was deaf. Francis learned to sign to Martin, and instructed him so that he could receive the sacraments of the Church. The first great school for the deaf was founded by the Abbé de l’Eppe,

After the decline of the catechumenate, “the term ‘catechesis’ was not revived and the institution which emerged instead was called “Catechism”, the name being then applied to the book, which was the prime source of that form of preaching.”²⁰⁰

Various methodologies arose, especially during the 20th century, but there was no universal magisterial guidance for methodology.

The *GCD* delineated the essential elements of handing on the faith. It was not a summary of doctrine, but an overview of necessary elements of catechetical methodology. The Congregation for the Clergy reclaimed the ancient concept of “catechesis” from the outset, including its title. Subsequently, the document conceived of catechesis as handing on the faith.

The *Directory* sought to alleviate problems that were already hindering the renewal sought by the Council, “The impediments seem rather to result either from a widespread failure to prepare suitably for the new and difficult tasks, or from a kind of thinking, as yet not fully developed, which is at times expressed in theories that hinder rather than help evangelization.”²⁰¹ It placed the responsibility for the catechetical crisis on two groups:

- those who are unable to understand the depth of the proposed renewal, as though the issue here were merely one of eliminating ignorance of the doctrine which must be taught. According to the thinking of those people, the remedy would be more frequent catechetical instruction. Once the matter has been considered that way, that remedy is immediately seen to be altogether unequal to the needs. In fact, the catechetical plan is to be thoroughly renewed, and this renewal has to do with a continuing education in the faith, not only for children but also for adults.

(1712-1789) who sought to save the souls of two little deaf girls with whom he had become acquainted. He gleaned signs from the deaf people living in France, invented his own where the vocabulary was limited, codified a sign language and began a school, the *Institut National des Sourds-muets de Paris*, (the National Deaf-Dumb Institute of Paris) in 1754. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a young Protestant clergyman from the United States, was sent to England to learn techniques for instruction for the deaf. The Braidwood family that held the “monopoly” on deaf education would not share their methodology. Circumstances of Providence led Gallaudet to Paris, where he learned the techniques mastered by de l’Epee from his successor, Abbé Sicard. He brought this home to the United States in 1817. In effect, deaf education in the United States owes a great debt of gratitude to two French priests. Unfortunately, it was not until after Vatican II that the Mass could be interpreted into American Sign Language.

²⁰⁰ *Encyclopedia of Theology*, 174.

²⁰¹ *GCD*, 9.

- those who are inclined to reduce the Gospel message to the consequences it has in men's temporal existence.²⁰²

The reception of the *GCD* was influenced by both these groups, and in the United States, it was the latter, often positions of catechetical leadership who initiated a collective, organized response to the *Directory*.²⁰³

The infrastructure had been in place for the dissemination of the *Directory*. In 1967, Sr. Michael Michels, OLVN, reported that the catechetical currents in the United States included large meetings of often over five thousand participants, workshops and institutes, semi-academic programs, and graduate academic programs. However, her musing about the future did not bode well for a positive reception of the *Directory*: those involved in catechetics were more and more dissatisfied with a pragmatic search for techniques; like the French and Dutch, they sought a synthesis of theory and practice; they thought programs paid too much attention to clerics, and that “Americans without clerical status need to do some independent thinking.” American Church leaders were seeking to redirect catechesis toward adult catechesis; and that American Catholics have not yet adjusted to life in a pluralistic society.²⁰⁴ A year later she added: the torrent of religious education materials published, crisis at structure-determining level (Catholic schools and parish religious education programs were in crisis), direction at the academic preparation level, Religious Studies programs, (particularly the work of Gabriel Moran, FSC), movement at the diocesan level (particularly the Archdiocese of Chicago), ferment at the local level with the focus on home religious education instruction, adult education, and increasing parental responsibility; seasonal currents taking place at annual gatherings of groups connected to religious education; and finally currents without structures.²⁰⁵

In 1970, Richard Reichert wrote, “We are finally in a position to build a truly effective religious education program.”²⁰⁶ This was due to: a full arsenal of methods,

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ This writer did not know the existence of the *Directory* until 1980, despite studies in theology and education from 1973-1979, and training by diocesan religious education leadership from 1976-1980.

²⁰⁴ Sr. Michael Michels, OLVN, “Catechetical Currents in the United States,” *Lumen Vitae* 22 (1967): 347-55.

²⁰⁵ “Currents in Religious Education,” *Lumen Vitae* 23 (1968): 706-15. This article was written under her baptismal name, Florence Michels.

²⁰⁶ Richard Reichert, “‘Periodic’ Religious Education, A Path Not Yet Explored,” *Living Light* 7 (1970): 57.

a wealth of psychological knowledge, deep insight into the core of the Christian proclamation and scriptural foundation, colorful imaginative textbooks and audio-visuals, and more trained professionals than ever before.²⁰⁷

Such was the American catechetical scene in 1971. The official English translation of the *General Directory* was long in coming. In a pamphlet entitled “Rome’s Answer...to the crisis in catechetics,” an unofficial translation appears through the auspices of the Society for the Christian Commonwealth, based in Warrenton, Virginia. The introduction provides a commentary on the proceedings of the International Catechetical Congress (COINCAT) held in Rome from September 20-25, 1971. The authors report that there was a decided attempt on the part of the English-speaking members of the Congress, especially Religious Studies programs at the college levels, to undermine the *Directory*.²⁰⁸ They base their findings on material provided by “CUF News Service.”²⁰⁹

CUF reported that the English-group discussions were controlled by Bishop William E. McManus of Chicago, who served as head of the department of Christian Formation of the United States Catholic Conference. Bishop Raymond Lucker of New Ulm, Minnesota, assisted him. Positive reactions to the *Directory* were ignored.²¹⁰ “These resolutions were openly critical of and even hostile to the just-approved GCD.”²¹¹

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ The Society for the Christian Commonwealth, “Rome’s Answer...to the crisis in catechetics,” (Warrenton, Va.: Society for the Christian Commonwealth, 1971), 1-3.

²⁰⁹ Most likely this news service was really the activity of Catholics United for the Faith (CUF) founded by H. Lyman Stebbins in 1968. It describes itself thus: Catholics United for the Faith (CUF) is an international lay apostolate, building on the only sure foundation for happiness and renewal of the family and society: the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church.

²¹⁰ Upon Lucker’s death, Paul Likoudis wrote, “To the end, Lucker was one of the most defiant and outspoken of the “gang of 40,” those American bishops who openly and actively support an agenda contrary to the Second Vatican Council, and encourage dissenting theologians, university professors, and catechists engaged in the ongoing process of ecclesial deconstruction engineered in the years prior to the convening of Vatican II” (*The Wanderer*, October 11, 2001);

www.petersnet.net/research/retrieve_full.cfm?RecNum=3961. Earlier in the article, Likoudis listed Lucker as one of a “small circle of self-proclaimed experts” who caused the destruction of catechesis in the United States. Gabriel Moran, Fr. Gerard Sloyan, and Fr. Richard McBrien were also named.

²¹¹ “Catholicus,” *DOA: The Ambush of the Universal Catechism*, ed. Ralph McInerny and Michael Novak (Notre Dame, Ind: Crisis Books, Orestes Brownson Society, 1993), 34-35. *Catholicus* is the pseudonym of Kenneth D. Whitehead.

The conclusions reached by the Congress as a whole were not “anti-*Directory*” in nature.²¹² In fact, the *Directory* is not mentioned by name. Instead, the Congress reiterated the fundamental tenets of catechesis found in the *GCD*. It also made specific recommendations for catechesis in the Third World, which it saw as being “the concern of the entire Church in its task of prophecy and salvation.”²¹³ It also referred to the work of the International Catechetical Study Weeks which will be discussed in Chapter III.

Sister Carol Jzgen, BVM told the group that the *Directory* had no application in the United States because it was legalistic in nature and therefore did not fit American Catechetics.²¹⁴ One resolution requested that bishops’ conferences “declare to all that the directory is a service document promulgating guidelines and is not legislation.”²¹⁵ The application of this statement demonstrates the desire of the Americans in particular to ignore the substance of the *Directory*.

According to CUF, another American called the *GCD* a product of “Roman theology”. One delegate censured the *Directory* for not incorporating the ideas of Bro. Gabriel Moran, an outspoken critic of the Holy See.²¹⁶ Can this be construed to mean that the work of one theologian should be utilized in catechesis rather than the work of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church?

There was much debate over the resolutions of the English-speaking group. John Cardinal Wright,²¹⁷ the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, took note “... of the tremendous popular tumult over the ‘new catechesis,’” exhorted the professional catechists to “clear your minds of theological smog, your hearts of induced sociological confusion, so that you may recapture joy in the Lord.”²¹⁸

²¹² Published in *Lumen Vitae* 27 (1971): 103-15.

²¹³ Ibid., 112.

²¹⁴ “Rome’s Answer,” 2.

²¹⁵ *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, ed. Michael Warren (Winona, Minn.: St. Mary’s Press, 1983), 81.

²¹⁶ “Rome’s Answer,” 2.

²¹⁷ Wright had served as the Bishop of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from 1959-1969.

²¹⁸ Paul Likoudis, “Bishop Raymond Lucker: A Tragic Figure of the ‘New Catechetics,’” *The Wanderer*, October 11, 2001. Throughout his episcopacy, Lucker was a voice that was usually connected with opposition to what he considered “reactionary” efforts on the part of the Cardinal Ratzinger and the Vatican for catechetical renewal. Lucker had wanted to write his reflections on Vatican II in the twenty-first century. He became too ill to accomplish the task. It was taken over by

The animosity of the English-speaking group towards the Magisterium is reflected in Bishop McManus' response to the Cardinal, suggesting that the cardinal might hire a professional public relations professional "to make sure he doesn't fall on his face in much more important matters."²¹⁹ Wright's terse response to McManus refers to what has become the driving force of catechetical renewal in the United States: the professional expert. "Well, maybe. But there are those of us who believe that professionalism, despite all its virtue, can ruin religion more quickly than sin — at least if the sinners have contrite and humble hearts."²²⁰

The English-speaking members asked the Cardinal if the *Directory* was binding by law.²²¹ "Wright answered that the Congregation for the Clergy was a 'service organization' and that the *Directory* is a 'document of service.'"²²² The authors report that the consensus of those present understood the answer to mean "the *Directory* is merely advisory in nature and is not binding as law. This was a weapon to use at home."²²³ The National Catholic News Service declared, "Catechetical Directory 'Service Document' Not Legislation."²²⁴

William McDonough who edited the reflections of fifteen people engaged in higher education in universities and seminaries. He entitled it *Revelation and the Church* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2003). Lucker is named as editor because the essays were written in his memory and with his inspiration. In the Preface, the co-editor, William McDonough wrote, "Though I am sure that this is not the book he would have written, I hope and trust he would like what we have done." In the appendix to the book, McDonough included Lucker's list of 67 teachings of the Church that have changed. Then he included 22 teachings that Lucker thought could change. In his introduction, Lucker discussed revelation and the development of doctrine, referring to *LG*, 25 [which will be noted in Chapter II] which "makes a distinction between definitive and authentic teaching... we have had further reflection on the secondary object, on those things not revealed in scripture but necessary in support of what is revealed there. There was never a debate about changing definitive teaching. We are asking how one knows what goes on in the secondary object and so is definitive. We want to look at another question, namely the difficulty in coming to know what is definitive (unchangeable) teaching and what is an authoritative (not unchangeable) teaching" (7). Lucker also edited a catechism written simultaneously with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Entitled *The People's Catechism*, it was touted as being "By the People of God For the People of God" (Crossroad, New York, 1995). In his review of *Revelation*, Sloyan states that Lucker was a "genuine *decus ecclesiae*, both of the local Church and of the collegium of bishops...he did his utmost to implement the pastoral decrees of the Catholic bishops of East and West" (*Worship* 78 [2004], 184).

²¹⁹ Likoudis, "Bishop Raymond Lucker," 5.

²²⁰ Ibid.,

²²¹ The question was allegedly asked by Carl Pfeifer, SJ, who later left the Jesuits and the priesthood, but has been prolific in publishing catechetical material with his wife, former Sister of St. Francis Janaan Manternach.

²²² "Rome's Answer," 3.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

The headline connotes an audience waiting for such a declaration. The CUF summary of the meeting reported on further developments in the English-speaking group. “One delegate pointed out that [all kinds of things] ‘are said somewhere in the Directory, and it is simply a matter of searching out a place which can be referred to as justifying the position we are taking.’”²²⁵ This may be the first record of the catechetical leadership in the United States ‘proof-texting’ magisterial catechetical documents.

What did the *Directory* intend? “The intent of this Directory is to provide the basic principles of pastoral theology—these principles have been taken from the Magisterium of the Church, and in a special way from the Second General Vatican Council—by which pastoral action in the ministry of the word can be more fittingly directed and governed.”²²⁶ The universality of the intention naturally derives from the universal nature of the Church herself.

While the *Directory* is theoretical, it is not nebulous.

Such a course of action was adopted especially for the following reason: the errors which are not infrequently noted in catechetics today can be avoided only if one starts with the correct way of understanding the nature and purposes of catechesis and also the truths which are to be taught by it, with due account being taken of those to whom catechesis is directed and of the conditions in which they live.²²⁷

Textbooks

The *Directory*, while sensitive to the diversity of those who are catechized, stands firm in the conviction that there are in fact universal principles in regard to the nature and purpose of catechesis, and to the dissemination of the truth. Cardinal Wright stressed, “The basic purpose of the directory is to provide an orientation for religious formation, rather than to establish binding rules.”²²⁸ While we cannot decipher what was exactly in the mind of the Cardinal, orientation is defined as “an integrated set of attitudes and beliefs” or “a person’s awareness of self with regard to position and time and place and personal relationships.”²²⁹ Since catechesis takes place in the Church, the one catechizing should have their orientation in the Church’s self-

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ *GDC*, Foreword.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 81.

knowledge regarding catechesis. In this function of orientation it would indeed be a *service* document.

The events reported in *Rome's Answer* are corroborated by the resolutions of the English-speaking language group attending the Congress. Some of the resolutions are very specific, and deviate from the catechetical practice of the Church. These will be seen later in Chapter III. Most of these resolutions are very broad and allow for the utmost laxity in regards to application of the tenets of the *Directory*. The following resolution serves as an example. "In order to achieve the aims and goals intended for the directory, the congress should request that national hierarchies respect the latitude left by the directory both with regard to cultural differences and the legitimate hierarchy of truths."²³⁰

In the late nineteenth century the phenomena known as "Americanism" called for the same cultural latitude. It claimed, "...that the Catholic Church should adjust its doctrines, especially in morality, to the culture of the people...it underrated the 'passive' virtues of humility and obedience to ecclesiastical authority".²³¹ It was condemned by Leo XIII. "The underlying principle of these new opinions is that, in order to more easily attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teaching more in accord with the spirit of the age and relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions."²³² He reiterates the unity of the Church, her doctrine and her government whose foundation is the Chair of Peter. Americanism "...would give rise to the suspicion that there are there among you some who conceive and would have the Church in America to be different from what it is in the rest of the world."²³³

The desire for widest possible application of the tenets of the *Directory* does seem to demonstrate a desire ignore them. The fact that the deficiencies exist in the United

²²⁹ Hyperdictionary.com

²³⁰ Final and Approved Resolutions of the English-speaking Language Group, contained in *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 81-85.

²³¹ Hardon, 16.

²³² Leo XIII, *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae*, Concerning New Opinions, Virtue, Nature and Grace with Regard to Americanism, January 22, 1899. It was addressed to James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore.

²³³ Ibid.

States is evidence that the tenets were ignored. What did they mean by latitude? Freedom, breathing space, room to maneuver, autonomy? For what purpose? Authors highly critical of the catechetical situation in the United States would say that they intended to undermine the Vatican's desire for catechetical renewal. Those supportive of the position of the English-speaking groups would say that the latitude would be following the "spirit of Vatican II."

Latitude towards cultural differences is plausible, toward the "hierarchy of truths" is problematic. The resolutions do not explain what they mean by a "legitimate hierarchy of truths."

This organized dissatisfaction with the *Directory* was pivotal in shaping catechesis in the United States for the next twenty-five years. It provided the milieu in which the deficiencies originated. The resolutions do not address the *Directory's* concern that the deposit was not being handed on in its integrity and completeness. They admit that parents are concerned "with much of what is being taught in modern religious education programs and through modern religious textbooks is different from what they learned as children. Many even accuse religion teachers and textbook writers of doctrinal error, omissions or misplaced emphasis."²³⁴

How the resolutions deal with this may be the first documentation of a direct counter-intervention in the reform of catechetical texts by members of both the hierarchy and the catechetical leadership of the United States.²³⁵ "Recognizing the existence of the situation, which in many ways is polarizing the Christian community, this congress should want to reassure these groups about the great and valuable progress made in religious education during the past quarter of a century."²³⁶ They seemed to attempt to placate concerned parents by reassuring them that the progress is being made despite evidence to the contrary.

Msgr. Michael Wrenn connected the resolutions to what was happening generally in catechesis. "Religious educators, for their part, initiated gradually into the

²³⁴ *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 82.

²³⁵ It was also occurring in Canada and the United Kingdom.

²³⁶ *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 82.

developments of the catechetical movement as these emerged, generally went along with these developments and brushed aside any criticisms of them as motivated by the ignorance and obtuseness of those who simply wanted to see their children taught.”²³⁷ Wrenn’s observations were published in 1991, just before the promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the concomitant evaluation of textbooks by the US bishops. He remarked that religious educators seldom admitted that there were any doctrinal errors or omissions in textbooks and adds that “nobody in authority ever seemed to want to look at the actual religion books in use to see if there *was* any error in them; the whole issue of possible doctrinal error was usually handled in the polite, bland, and gingerly way that Church authorities have generally used in approaching doctrinal deviation in the post-conciliar period.”²³⁸ This would change in 1995.

Focus on American Catechesis

The National Conference of Directors of Religious Education, a subgroup of the National Catholic Education Association produced a commentary of the *Directory*. It corresponded to the remarks made by the English-speaking group at COINCAT. The commentary, entitled *Focus on American Catechesis*, strongly emphasized that the *Directory* provided only guidelines, therefore it *cannot state* that, “Those things which are said about divine revelation, the criteria according to which the Christian message is to be expounded, and the more outstanding elements of that same message, are to be held by all.”²³⁹ The Commentary grants that this inconsistency is more “apparent than real.” It reduced the *Directory* to opinion rather than Magisterial jurisdiction. “The thrust of the statement seems to be that this material is to be held by all, not in virtue of any juridical claims of the *Directory*, but because in the judgment of the authors these two sections contain the common teaching of the Church.”²⁴⁰

The editors included a brief essay on the work of the Directors’ Conference Religious Education. The conference “has become one of the most influential, if not the most influential force in religious education.”²⁴¹ In the essay, reference was made to the

²³⁷ Michael Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 100.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

²³⁹ *GDC*, Foreword.

²⁴⁰ Thomas Sullivan and John Meyers, *Focus on American Catechetics, A Commentary on the General Catechetical Directory*, NCEA (National Conference of Directors of Religious Education, 1972), 3.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, back cover. The organization is now known as the National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors, or NPCD.

“widely acclaimed ‘Metairie Statement’” issued from the first meeting of the organization. “The conference issued a statement giving the rationale for the defense of the most widely-used textbooks in religious education in the schools.”²⁴² The statement rejected extremes, “...(a) that which identifies memorized doctrinal formulation as the essence of catechesis and (b) that which denies any doctrinal content as belonging to catechesis”.²⁴³ The statement addressed textbooks. “A unique phenomenon in the last few years has been the number of attacks made by some highly organized groups as well as by individuals against almost all modern curricular materials.”²⁴⁴ It admits that religious educators must be subject to evaluation and criticism by bishops and parents, “...we reject these attacks as unwarranted and inaccurate and harmful to Christian Education. We deplore the attacks against the orthodoxy of many textbooks.”²⁴⁵

Generally speaking, the *Directory* had little effect on catechesis in the United States. “...in practice, the GCD was yet to be another directory that did not really ‘direct’, a guidebook that did not really ‘guide’. Lip service would readily be paid to this Roman document; but the religious educators would go on exactly as before.”²⁴⁶ The veracity of this statement by Wrenn is supported by the *Commentary*, which states that the Directory is important because it is based heavily on the teachings of Vatican Council II. “Finally, the Directory enjoys the approbation of the Holy Father. For all these reasons it deserves the greatest respect and serious study of all engaged in the catechetical apostolate.”²⁴⁷ The *Commentary* does not say that implementation of the *Directory* should be undertaken with respect and study.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ “Metairie Statement,” from the NCEA sponsored Conference of Directors of Religious Education, Cenacle retreat House, Metairie, La., copy sent to participants from Rev. John F. Meyers, Executive Secretary, Superintendents Department, NCEA, June 24, 1969. It was very difficult to obtain a copy of the statement. The current (2005) staff of NCEA was unaware of it and could not find it in their records. It was finally tracked down at Catholic University of America in 2006.

²⁴⁴ “Metairie Statement.”

²⁴⁵ Ibid.: “Specifically we reject the attacks which have been made against the following materials: Elementary – Our life in God Series (Sadlier); Word and Worship Program (Benziger); Bible, Life, and Worship Series (Allyn and Bacon); Come to the Father (Paulist). Secondary – Lord and King (Holt, Rinehart) V. Novak; Loyola Press Series, M. Link; Roots of faith series (Harcourt, Brace, and World); Life and Light Series (Sadlier); To Live is Christ (Regnery); Living With Christ (Christian Brother Series).

²⁴⁶ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 162.

²⁴⁷ Sullivan and Meyers, *Focus on American Catechetics*, 5.

In summary, care for catechesis has been one of the primary focuses of the post-conciliar Church. “The ministry of catechesis draws ever fresh energy from the councils.”²⁴⁸ National Directories were to be developed, applying the general principles of the GCD to the specific situation unique to each country.

Synods

In its constitutions and decrees, Vatican II explained the Church to the Church, the People of God. Paul VI sought to do this more effectively. The Synod of Bishops was promulgated on September 15, 1965 in his *motu proprio* entitled *Apostolica Sollicitudo*, while the Council was still in session.

Therefore, after careful consideration, as an expression of our esteem and respect for all catholic Bishops, and in order to provide them with a clearer and more effective means of sharing our solicitude for the universal Church, on our own initiative and by our apostolic authority, we erect and constitute in the city of Rome a body for the universal Church, directly and immediately subject to our authority, to which we give the special name of Synod of Bishops.”²⁴⁹

The new entity is described in the *Decree on Bishops*. “Bishops from different parts of the world in a manner and according to a system determined or to be determined by the Roman Pontiff will render to the Supreme Pastor a more effective auxiliary service in a council which shall be known by the special name of Synod of Bishops.”²⁵⁰

The first of these Synods was held in 1967 and concerned with the revision of Canon Law. The second, in 1971, focused on the ministerial priesthood and justice in the world. The third synod was held from September 27-October 26, 1974. Its theme was “The Evangelization of the Contemporary World”. On December 8, 1975, Paul VI promulgated the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. In his introductory remarks, the pontiff stated that the Bishops entrusted to him the fruits of their discussions at the Synod, “...stating that they awaited from him a fresh forward

²⁴⁸ *Catechesi Tradendae* (hereafter, CT), 13.

²⁴⁹ Paul VI, *Apostolica Sollicitudo*, http://www.vatican.net/holy_father/paul_vi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19650915_apostolica-sollicitudo_en.html, September 15, 1965

²⁵⁰ *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church*, 5.

impulse, capable of creating within a Church still more firmly rooted in the undying power and strength of Pentecost a new period of Evangelization.”²⁵¹

The theme of the fourth synod was: “Catechesis in Our Time, Especially of Children and Youth.” In the closing speech of the Synod, Pope Paul VI summed up its work. “We express our joy that the members of the Synod have found themselves in agreement on the principal aspects of catechesis, and that at the conclusion of their work have submitted to us useful suggestions contained in thirty-four propositions.”²⁵² His closing remarks were organized under three headings: integrity of doctrine, necessity of a systematic catechesis and the usefulness of formulas.

In the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, great attention is paid to all three aspects of catechesis. John Paul II promulgated it on the first anniversary of his pontificate.²⁵³

In essence, the exhortation takes up again the reflections that were prepared by Pope Paul VI, making abundant use of the documents left by the synod. Pope John Paul I, whose zeal and gifts as a catechist amazed us all, had taken them in hand and was preparing to publish them when he was suddenly called to God. To all of us he gave an example of catechesis at once popular and concentrated on the essential, one made up of simple words and actions that were able to touch the heart. I am therefore taking up the inheritance of these two Popes in response to the request which was expressly formulated by the Bishops at the end of the fourth general assembly of the synod and which was welcomed by Pope Paul VI in his closing speech. I am also doing so in order to fulfill one of the chief duties of my apostolic charge. Catechesis has always been a central care in my ministry as a priest and as a Bishop.²⁵⁴

In conclusion, the pope added, “I ardently desire that this apostolic exhortation to the whole Church should strengthen the solidity of the faith and of Christian living, should give fresh vigor to the initiatives in hand, should stimulate creativity - with the

²⁵¹ *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 2.

²⁵² Paul VI, “Discourse at the Conclusion of the Synod of Bishops,” October 30, 1977. *L’Osservatore Romano* – English Edition (November 10, 1977), 1,16

²⁵³ On the election of Cardinal Wojtyla as Pope, Berard Marthaler, executive editor of *Living Light*, expressed great hope for catechesis in the pontificate of John Paul II. “Catechesis must lead people to the mystery of Christ – a personal acceptance. Pope John Paul II echoed the same message in the stirring homily he delivered on the occasion of his investiture as Bishop of Rome. It is a message we can expect to hear him repeat again and again during what we pray is a long and Spirit-filled pontificate” (Editorial, *Living Light* 15 (1978), 516.

²⁵⁴ *CT*, 4.

required vigilance - and should help to spread among the communities the joy of bringing the mystery of Christ to the world.”²⁵⁵

Kevane stated that *Catechesi Tradendae*, “...actually contains within itself the power to put an end to the period of confusion and unrest which has followed so surprisingly upon Vatican II.”²⁵⁶ “The synods and then the apostolic exhortations took up some themes already addressed by the council, dealt with them in changed contexts...and made some contributions to a healthy development of doctrine that one expects from Catholic Christianity.”²⁵⁷

Catechesis in the United States

Up until the Council, one text was dominant in American religious education classrooms. *The Baltimore Catechism*, a question and answer text had been in use since 1891. In keeping with the desire of the Council of Trent that national catechisms be written under the inspiration of the *Roman Catechism*, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore mandated preparation of this catechism in 1884, “When published, it is to be obligatory.”²⁵⁸

While it had been revised and broken down to address specific age groups, it remained strictly a question and answer catechism. Its strength was found in clearly defined points of doctrine supported by scriptural references. *The Baltimore Catechism* was used widely in a Catholic school system that was unparalleled in scope. The First Plenary Council of Baltimore (1852) decreed that every parish should have a Catholic School. It was recommended that Religious staff these schools. In such a uniform system, the *Baltimore Catechism* became the mainstay of religious instruction. After Vatican II, the use of the *Baltimore Catechism* appeared to come to an abrupt halt. Its content and method were often ridiculed in many quarters. In reality,

It has always been a mistake to imagine that catechesis in the days of the

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Eugene Kevane, “Teaching the Faith: Reflections on *Catechesi Tradendae*,” talk given at the national meeting of the *Consortium Perfectae Caritatis*, Chicago, April 12, 1980.

²⁵⁷ Gerald O’Collins, *Living Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 36.

²⁵⁸ *Decrees of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore*, Title vii, 1884. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume II. Published 1907. New York: Robert Appleton Company.
Encyclopedia <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02235a.htm>

Baltimore Catechism was *limited* to making children memorize the questions and answers in the book. Teachers and catechists *used* the book; but they also regularly supplemented it in practice with Bible stories and stories from the lives of the saints and of other appropriate role models, including contemporary figures; they also used the history of the Church. Teachers in those days placed heavy emphasis on frequenting the sacraments; students went regularly to Mass and to confession in those days.²⁵⁹

Others saw the question and answer format as a hindrance.

One reason for the revised Baltimore Catechism's failure to present a vivid picture of our faith is its exclusive use of the question and answer method. This method is too weak an instrument to use in the proclamation of the Word which is the Good News, for it makes too objective a thing out of faith...The exclusive use of the question and answer method is a pedagogical strait jacket.²⁶⁰

Religious sisters and brothers were not the only catechists in the United States.

Outside of the Catholic School system, relatively unsung cadres of religious educators were laywomen who taught religion in "CCD" classes. In 2003, the Church in the United States celebrated the centennial year of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). The Confraternity itself was a product of the catechetical renewal sparked by the Council of Trent. St. Charles Borromeo can be credited as the founder of the Confraternity in the Diocese of Milan. It spread throughout the Western world. In 1903, it was pioneered in the United States by Marion Gurney "to catechize a nation of Catholic immigrants."²⁶¹ She looked at the successful model of CCD in England, and established it in New York under the auspices of Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan. Catechists underwent a two- year training program before they were commissioned. Gurney was assisted by B. Ellen Burke, and supported by Rev. James Connelly.²⁶²

This model spread across the United States, and became a national movement in 1934, headquartered in Washington, DC. The work of the Confraternity had first

²⁵⁹ "Catholicus," in *DOA: The Ambush of the Universal Catechism*, 28.

²⁶⁰ Gerard Sloyan, "Religious Education as a Correlate of 'Religious Knowledge': Some Problem Areas," *Religious Education* 61 (1966): 186-287, a paper presented to the Professors and Research section, Division of Christian Education, National Council of Churches, at Louisville, Kentucky, Feb. 15, 1965.

²⁶¹ Mary Kay Schoen, "Confraternity Celebrates Centennial" in *Catechetical Leadership* (October 2003): 7. *Catechetical Leadership* is a publication of the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership. While essentially a newsletter for members, this is the only publication of the NCCL after the cessation of publication of *Living Light* in 2005.

focused on catechesis for the whole parish, but soon focused on children. It also developed their own materials including the *Baltimore Catechism* and the English translation of the *Vulgate*. Wm. H. Sadlier and Benzinger Brothers published the materials. While the National Confraternity ceased to exist after Vatican II, the term “CCD” often remains synonymous with parish religious education in the United States.

Just previous to the Council, Wm. H. Sadlier published something altogether new.²⁶³

Anticipating many of the emphases of Vatican Council II, in the late 1950’s Sadlier pioneered the kerygmatic approach to catechetics, drawing upon the fourfold “insertion” into the mystery of Christ through scripture, liturgy, doctrine, and Christian witness. This resulting series, called the *On Our Way Series*, was developed by Sister Maria de la Cruz with the advice of Reverend Johannes Hofinger, S.J. and achieved national and international acclaim.²⁶⁴

This series departed from the question and answer format, and devised a methodology adapted to the grade levels used in schools. It combined Bible stories, doctrinal explanations, and practical applications.

Now the United States saw a new Catechism Series with pupil texts and Teacher Guides for each Grade exemplifying the refreshing ‘kerygmatic approach’. The emphasis on Christian love and joy was a startling departure from the negative concepts of the past...It is not surprising that the authoress of the first new catechism to appear in the United States for so many years immediately became a most popular speaker on catechetics, not only in her adopted United States but throughout the world.²⁶⁵

After Vatican II, it was revised to reflect the teachings of the Council. Many Catholic publishers followed the lead of Sadlier, resulting in a variety of religious education texts in schools and parish religious education programs.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Gurney founded the Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine whose apostolate was catechesis.

²⁶³ Other textbook series had been written but Sadlier and the work of Aymes and Hofinger became a benchmark for the genre.

²⁶⁴ History of the William H. Sadlier Company, http://www.sadlier.com/about_history.cfm. Hofinger was a disciple of Josef Jungmann, SJ, whose initial work had been in the liturgical renewal of the 1930’s and 1940’s. He developed a form of catechesis which was based on the proclamation of the Gospel called “kerygmatic catechesis”. This approach will be discussed in Chapter IV.

²⁶⁵ Editor’s Preface in *Presenting Christ, Selected Lectures by Sr. Maria de la Cruz Aymes* (Langley, Slough, Bucks, England: St. Paul. Publications, 1969), 10-11.

²⁶⁶ By 1997, these publishers included: Brown-Roa, Benziger, Silver-Burdett Ginn, Loyola University Press, Ignatius Press (which published two series), Daughters of St. Paul, Ave Maria Press, and St. Mary’s Press.

The authors and publishers desired to be faithful to the Council. They realized that one of the “signs of the times” was a shift in catechetical methodology, a catechetical *aggiornamento* so to speak. They realized that “more is required of Christian education than the handing on of shopworn formulas, tired customs, and trite devotions.”²⁶⁷ In the effort to do more, the result was less. The articulation of this desire in many religious education texts resembled the swing of a pendulum, moving from a catechesis that was perceived as “shopworn” to a catechesis that, according to Msgr. Michael Wrenn “ended up being almost devoid of a concrete Christian message to pass on...”²⁶⁸

In this context George Kelly observed,

One other aspect of the textbook question and the professional experts who dominate their composition is related to the book business itself...After Vatican II these firms came to dominate, as never before, the make-up and content of religion books. Newness and change, even revolution, were popular in the 1960's and profitable...Profit was the driving force for most religious education publishers, not the doctrinal accuracy. Tradition, orthodoxy, even sectarianism, hitherto a guarantee of sales success, became money losers... Imprecision or lacunae in doctrinal content in new books was overlooked because post-Vatican II was considered a time of experimentation.²⁶⁹

Basic Teachings

The specific doctrines that were found to be either inadequate or insufficient are reminiscent of a similar “list” of doctrines made by the Bishops of the United States. While “No list of documents can bring about real Christian education,” they decided that, “certain basic teachings are necessary for doctrinal substance and stability.”²⁷⁰ Subsequently they published *Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education* in January, 1973.

This text sets down the principal elements of the Christian message. These

²⁶⁷ Berard Marthaler, “The Modern Catechetical Movement in Roman Catholicism: Issues and Personalities,” in *Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics*, 278.

²⁶⁸ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 89.

²⁶⁹ *Catechetical Instruction and the Catholic Faithful*, ed. George A. Kelly (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1982), 220. Kelly opined that “despite a long list of official statements seeking to restore a proper balance between good pedagogy and sound doctrine, years passed before the experimental texts were amended.”

²⁷⁰ NCCB, *Basic Teachings for Religious Education* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Publications Office, 1973), 1.

basic teachings are here specified by the American Bishops, who as bishops hold in the Church special responsibility for determining the content of faith instruction. [Lumen Gentium 25] It is necessary that these basic teachings be central in all religious instruction, never be overlooked or minimized, and be given adequate and frequent emphasis.²⁷¹

This document must be seen in context of the bishops' pastoral letter *To Teach as Jesus Did* published three months earlier, which was written "against the background of the Council's *Declaration on Education*, which requested national hierarchies to issue detailed statements on the educational ministry considered in the context of the Church and society in their own countries."²⁷²

The bishops stated that "Religious truth must be communicated in a relevant manner which gives each student a vital experience of faith." But they emphasized, "...it must also be transmitted fully and accurately."²⁷³ Acknowledging difficulties in religious education, they desired that, "Parents, religious educators, including authors and publishers of textbooks, pastors, bishops, must seek together, in a spirit a mutual respect and shared commitment to the values of orthodoxy and relevance, to solve the problems and ease the tensions that now exist."²⁷⁴ They then cite the *GCD* as a source of guidance for this endeavor, and look ahead to *The Basic Teachings* which was to be published shortly. In *Basic Teachings* the bishops stated the intended audience: parents, catechists and clergy, as well as "writers and publishers of catechetical texts."²⁷⁵

The bishops listed three themes which should be carried throughout all religious instruction: the importance of prayer, participation in the liturgy, and familiarity with Scripture.²⁷⁶ They then listed the basic teachings, describing the essential elements to be contained in each.

1. The mystery of one God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit
2. True worship of God in a world that ignores him.
3. Knowledge of God and the witness of Christian love.
4. Jesus Christ, Son of God, the firstborn of all creation, and savior.
5. Creation, the beginning of the history of man's salvation.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² NCCB, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, no.2.

²⁷³ Ibid., no.54.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ NCCB, *Basic Teachings*, 2.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 3-4. With the articles of the Creed, these are the classic four pillars of catechesis.

6. Jesus Christ, the center of all God's saving works.
7. Jesus Christ, true man and true God in the unity of the divine person.
8. Jesus Christ, savior and redeemer of the world.
9. The Holy Spirit in the Church and in the life of the Christian.
10. The sacraments, actions of Christ in the Church (the universal sacrament).
11. Religious instruction on the sacraments.
12. The Eucharist, center of all sacramental life.
13. The sacrament of matrimony.
14. The new man in the Spirit.
15. Human and Christian freedom.
16. The sins of man
17. The moral life of Christians.
18. The perfection of Christian love.
19. Specifics in the teaching of morality.
20. The Church, people of God and institution for salvation.
21. The Church as community.
22. The quest for unity.
23. The Church as the institution for salvation.
24. Mary, Mother of God, Mother and Model of the Church.
25. Final reunion with God.

Kenneth Whitehead opined that the bishops of the United States failed to oversee if the *Basic Teachings* were implemented in religious education programs and textbooks. "That a fair number of these same 'required' doctrines never were effectively taught was made clear as recently as 1997 -- a full quarter of a century after the "Basic Teachings" -- when the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism issued a list of 'consistent deficiencies' in the catechetical texts in current use."²⁷⁷

Alfred McBride, O. Praem., did feel that the *Basic Teachings* should become the basis for religious education. In *Creative Teaching in Christian Education*, McBride devised a method for religious education using the *Basic Teachings*. In Chapter Two, he asked, "Where do the *Basic Teachings* come from? What is the context for the *Basic Teachings*?"²⁷⁸ His answer to the first two is "the Church."

McBride's efforts to concretize the directives of the Bishops are almost unknown today. He emphasized the place of experience in religious education while staying

²⁷⁷ Kenneth Whitehead, "The Catholic Bishops and the Scandals. How Could They Have Done This?" *Voices*, Online Edition, "Woman for Faith and Family," Michaelmas 2002, Volume 17, No. 3, St. Louis, MO.

²⁷⁸ Alfred McBride, O. Praem., *Creative Teaching in Christian Education* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978), 30-35.

rooted in doctrinal integrity. He stated that *To Teach as Jesus Did* provided the impetus for this. He felt that “the goals and means urged by the pastoral were already taking place, and gave purpose to trends that were already in the air.”²⁷⁹ For McBride, the most important trend was the emerging focus on religious experience. He was not the innovator of this trend, but is attuned to the climate of religious educational thought in the United States at the time, and acknowledges the influence of theologians such as Bernard Lonergan, SJ, and psychologists, especially Maslow.

McBride referred to the kerygmatic catechists of the early 60’s, whose work will be analyzed in later chapters. He felt they couched religious experience in terms of conversion, but “Today it is clear that the stages of self-realization, responding to God’s call, are a series of conversions corresponding to moral and spiritual development.”²⁸⁰ He does not reduce religious experience to mere emotions. “The major assumptions that make religious experience possible are two-fold. (1) Man’s nature as an unrestricted drive toward the infinite (2) God’s nature as an unrestrained lover searching out union with man...the assumptions must be operative in the world of the religious educator.”²⁸¹ McBride centers religious education in the interconnectedness between God and man. Religious experience is an experience of God. This is of prime importance in regard to other influential thinkers for whom religious experience was reduced to self and the community. Following the directives of the American Bishops, McBride reiterates experience in *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakoinia*. Within these, creeds and doctrines are part of the kerygma. “Dogma will be at the service of people, performing its native task of invoking within them renewed possibility of union with Christ.”²⁸²

McBride was highly optimistic about the success of *To Teach as Jesus Did* and *Basic Teachings*. He envisioned renewed efforts in evangelization and the interconnectedness of religious truths, moral development and the sacrament of confession. His article evokes Pius X, “The task of the catechist is to take up one or other of the truths of faith or of Christian morality and then explain it in all its parts;

²⁷⁹ Alfred McBride, O. Praem., “Trends in Religious Education: Planning for the Coming Decade” *Living Light* 11 (1974): 17.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 18.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 19.

²⁸² Ibid., 20.

and since amendment of life is the chief aim of his instruction, the catechist must needs make a comparison between what God commands us to do and what is our actual conduct.”²⁸³

McBride rested his hope for moral development on the theories developed by Sidney Simon and Lawrence Kohlberg.²⁸⁴ The former developed “Values Clarification”; the latter developed a theory of moral development that was heavily critiqued by his peers. Both were influenced by the work of John Dewey, the pre-eminent shaper of American educational theory and practice. Neither Simon nor Kohlberg believed in moral absolutes. In spite of McBride’s appreciation for the the two documents, his alliance with the thought of these two theorists would lead to a weakening of his application of their directives. He had tremendous influence on the practice of religious education in the United States.

The National Catechetical Directory

In 1979, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops published the *National Catechetical Directory* for the United States, *Sharing the Light of Faith*. It was designed by a committee under the leadership of Wilfrid H. Paradis, a priest of the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire and Sr. Mariella Frye, MHSH. David Galusha summarized the situation on the eve of the publication of the National Directory: majority of catechetical programs do not meet the needs of the religious educator, the goals set by the parish council are not being met, parents were complaining about a lack of content, teachers are complaining about parental participation, pastors were complaining about lack of attendance, and young people were complaining that they have heard it all before.²⁸⁵

The nature of the *National Directory* and the process of its construction were recorded by Anne Marie Mongovan, OP in her doctoral dissertation.²⁸⁶ She served as a member of the Committee for the Directory.

²⁸³ Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis*, 13.

²⁸⁴ Paul Vitz engaged in study of both these theories. Refer to his book *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1977), and in a series of articles published in the *New Oxford Review*, 1981.

²⁸⁵ David Galusha, “Achieving Balance in Religious Education,” *Living Light* 13 (1976): 182.

²⁸⁶ Anne Marie Mongovan, “The Relationship Between Revelation and Catechesis,” in “Sharing the Light of Faith” (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1982). Mongovan’s director was Berard

Before the *Directory* was drafted, the NCD staff prepared a document: “Toward a National Catechetical Directory: First Consultation”, containing a synopsis of the *General Catechetical Directory, To Teach as Jesus Did, Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education, and Justice in the World*.²⁸⁷ The NCD committee met for the first time in December, 1973.

The *Directory* was written after much consultation.²⁸⁸ “This was done in response to the Bishops’ desire for dialogue: within the Catholic Community; between the Catholic Church and other Christian churches, as well as with the representatives of other religions; and between the Church and the human family.”²⁸⁹ The “process of dialogue included three extensive consultations with the Church at large and with scholars, involving hundreds of thousands of people and resulting in tens of thousands of recommendations.”²⁹⁰

The *GCD* directed,

The discussion here is not meant to be exhaustive, because the subject covers points which are unique and often very much different in the various parts of the Church. National directories will have the task of filling out this outline and applying it to the circumstances of individual countries and regions.²⁹¹

The official commentary of the *NCD* stated its first guiding principle was, “The broad directives of the *General Catechetical Directory* be adapted and applied to the needs

Marthaler, who served as general consultant for the Directory office. One of her readers was Mary Charles Bryce, OSB, another important figure in American catechetical renewal.

²⁸⁷ NCCB, *Basic Teachings and To Teach as Jesus Did* (Washington: D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Publications Office, 1973) are discussed later in this chapter.

²⁸⁸ In comments published in *The Georgia Bulletin*, Paradis reported that there were over 17,000 responses to the consultation, which actually represented 50,000 to 100,00 persons since people responded in groups. Marie Mulvenna, “First Major Report Issued on the Catechetical Directory,” *The Georgia Bulletin*, The newspaper of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, print issue May 2, 1974. (www.georgiabulletin.org/local/1974/05/02/b/. 3/15/2006).

²⁸⁹ *Sharing the Light of Faith*, National Directory for Catholics of the United States United States Catholic Conference, Department of Education, Washington, DC, 1979, p.2 . “Preface” in *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Directory for Catholics of the United States United States Catholic Conference* (hereafter *NCD*) (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, United State Catholic Conference, 1979), 2.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*. Literally, this writer’s participation in the catechetical ministry of the Church began at one of these consultations in the Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma in the fall of 1975.

²⁹¹ *GCD*, 1.

and conditions of the United States.”²⁹² “Broad”, like “latitude”, is a subjective term – what did it mean objectively? The Preface noted that the document was “an official statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and has been approved by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy according to the established norms.”²⁹³ This statement is footnoted and refers to *GCD* 134, which describes the authority of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in regards to catechesis. The *GCD* is referenced often in Chapter II, “The Catechetical Ministry of the Church”. Otherwise, the *NCD*’s refers to the *GCD* only sporadically. The *NCD* also asserted that it reflected the 1977 Synod of Bishops.

In Chapter IV the *NCD* will be discussed in the context of the catechetical influence of Gabriel Moran.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was inspired but not mandated by the Second Vatican Council. Its compilation was mandated during the Extraordinary Synod of 1985. Pope John Paul II promulgated it on October 11, 1992. Its importance is defined in the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*. “The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*...is a statement of the Church’s faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Church’s Magisterium. I declare it to be a sure norm for the teaching and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion.”²⁹⁴

The mindset of the majority of the catechetical leadership in the United States was not one that would accept any kind of definitive elucidation of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Gerard S. Sloyan, who had formed many of those leaders as the chair of the Religious Education Department of the Catholic University of America, was a critic.

In 1966 he commented on the Baltimore Catechism,

²⁹² *Sharing the Light of Faith: An Official Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, United States Catholic Conference, 1981), 5. Berard Marthaler was the author. His work was overseen by an Episcopal board appointed by the President of the United States Catholic Conference, Archbishop John Quinn: Archbishop John Whealon, Bishop Rene Gracida, and Bishop Raymond Lucker.

²⁹³ *NCD*, 3.

²⁹⁴ John Paul II, *Fidei Depositum*, 3.

But perhaps it is blameworthy to begin to build on the questionable assumption that there should be such a thing as a catechism in the first place...As a neat package of faith, tied up with the ribbon of episcopal approval, the catechism tends to give pastors – and even teachers, with less excuse – the impression that by ‘teaching’ the catechism, they are passing on the faith. Catholics have such a passion for objective, orthodox truth – and for ‘having’ this truth – that they often seem to overlook the fact that for the truth to be truly personal and meaningful to anyone, there must be an interplay, a correlation between the recorded truth and the person. It is not enough to be able to read and listen. A need must be expressed by the individuals to which a proposed truth corresponds.²⁹⁵

In 1968, he wrote against the use of a catechism in religious education, which reflected the desire of catechetical leadership to publish textbooks that were lacking in Christian doctrine, as has been noted. His conclusions are important, foreshadowing the negative reception that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was to receive in the United States.

In *Speaking of Religious Education*, Sloyan analyzed religious education in the United States immediately after Vatican II. He embarked on a “mission” to seek out that which was worth saving in American Catholic religious education.²⁹⁶ “The question posed by the essays in this book is not how right what went before was, but how right it is in the present, and will be in the immediate future?”²⁹⁷ Sloyan was concerned with the audience to which a catechism would be addressed. He stated that certain psychological and developmental hallmarks would preclude the use of a catechism, but failed to propose a way in which the deposit of faith could be handed on in an age/maturation appropriate manner. He failed to address the need for the deposit to be handed on at all.

Rather, he concluded that, “The ideal structure of an aid-book for religion study would seem to be one that highlights the love of God who created us and sent his Son to save us, and who sent the Spirit to remain with us in the living Church. Such a volume would bring out the nature of the Christian life as a loving response to the

²⁹⁵ Sloyan, “Religious Education,” 189.

²⁹⁶ Sloyan, a Roman Catholic priest and Scripture scholar, had served at Catholic University of America for many years, ultimately serving as Chair of the Department of Religious Education. At the time that this book was published, he had recently resigned from CUA and was teaching in the Department of Religion at Temple University, a non-Catholic institution. At CUA, he had directed the doctoral dissertation of Gabriel Moran.

²⁹⁷ Gerard S. Sloyan, *Speaking of Religious Education* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 10.

love of God.”²⁹⁸ This is an admirable and necessary approach to religious education, but one must ask, “How will the students come to know all that God has taught us about himself, in love, so that we may come to know him better?”

In the end, Sloyan refuted the use of a catechism as one of the means by which we can come to know God. “It seems clear that a national catechism even for adults would be out of place at the present time. Contemporary theological thought is only in its adolescent stage, and any attempt to give it final expression, even catechetically, will be truncated and incomplete.”²⁹⁹

Does Sloyan reject the teaching of Christ handed on by the Church for almost two thousand or accept only current theological thought? “Moreover what is expressed nationally frequently carries within it the hallmark of permanence. There is the question, is it possible to write such a catechism in the light of the new insights?”³⁰⁰ The Church felt that it was possible to do so. Many would decry its publication for the same reason that Sloyan expressed “...the fear of infidelity to theological insight would seem to suggest that a national catechism is essentially a hindrance.”³⁰¹ What of the fidelity to Christ?

He concluded, “A conservative strain marks what is to be found in this book. This is because my chief concern has been to conserve; but only what is worth saving. And I hope to know the difference.”³⁰² This reflection resembles the desire of Vatican II – looking to the past, seeing how it works in the present, what it will mean for the future. But Sloyan was one of the first catechetical leaders to disregard what existed before the Council, and to “start from scratch” so to speak, basing new suppositions on a foundation made by their own hands.

The Universal Catechism Reader

In January 1990, the bishops of the United States established an *ad hoc* committee to review the provisional catechism. The committee then circulated the document to

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 19.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 26. The National Adult Catechism was published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2006.

³⁰⁰ Sloyan, *Speaking of Religious Education*, 26.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

approximately thirty experts in theology, catechesis and canon law.

In January 1990, under the aegis of the Jesuit run Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University, papers concerning the proposed catechism were delivered. They were published as the *Universal Catechism Reader*, edited by Thomas Reese, SJ. In the acknowledgements, Reese thanked his agent and publisher for having “the faith and wisdom to commit themselves to the project before the papers were written, in fact before the universal catechism was released.”³⁰³ Reese states that they came together to assist the consultation. He does not state who instigated the discussions, nor if they had been asked to do so by the bishops themselves.³⁰⁴

Each contributor was well known in the catechetical field and several had been part of the catechetical leadership in the United States who interfered with the wide-spread usage of the *General Catechetical Directory*.³⁰⁵ Reese wrote the introduction and like Sloyan, was concerned with the proposed audience of a catechism. “The prologue to the draft indicates that it does not attempt adaptations demanded by the inculturation of the Christian faith which, it says, is the responsibility of local catechisms.”³⁰⁶

From Reese’s perspective, only national catechisms could provide for the Catholics of a certain country. However, the aims of a universal catechism would be universal. It would be an application of the ancient canon of St. Vincent of Lerins: “Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which had been delivered everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense ‘Catholic,’ which, as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally.”³⁰⁷ Did Reese believe that it would be impossible for all the members of the Church to believe all of the teachings of Church?

³⁰² Ibid., 11.

³⁰³ Thomas Reese, SJ, editor, *Universal Catechism Reader* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990). Fr. Reese served as the editor of the Jesuit magazine, “America”. In May 2005, he was asked to resign as editor by his Jesuit superiors at the request of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the faith.

³⁰⁴ *Universal Catechism Reader*, 5.

³⁰⁵ The authors: Mary Boys, SNJM, Francis Buckley, SJ, Lisa Sowle Cahill, Lawrence Cunningham, Avery Dulles, SJ, Peter Fink, SJ, Monika Hellwig, David Hollenbach, SJ, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, Bishop Raymond Lucker, Berard Marthaler, OFM.Conv., William O’Malley, SJ, David Power, OMI, William Spohn, SJ, John Wright, SJ.

³⁰⁶ *Universal Catechism Reader*, 8.

He listed seven issues that occurred repeatedly in the scholarly conversation concerning the draft of the *Catechism*. The first was seen in the previous paragraph. “Is a catechism for the universal church necessary?”³⁰⁸ The other criticisms are summarized as following³⁰⁹: (2) the four part structure of the catechism, compartmentalizing faith from life and worship, (3) the catechism fails to distinguish between what is essential from what is less important...everything is presented without regard to the hierarchy of truths,³¹⁰ (4) the universal catechism is deficient in its use of scripture, that scripture is only used as a proof-text, (5) while the catechism has many quotations from Vatican II, the quotes are selective and mistranslated (6) the catechism lacks an appreciation of the history and the development of doctrine, “the theologies of St. Paul and the Gospel writers are presented as if their theologies are not only identical but also the same as the theology expressed at Nicea and Trent,”³¹¹ (7) the sexist language of the catechism is unacceptable.

In brief, the catechism fails to reflect contemporary developments in Scripture, history, liturgy, doctrine, catechetics, and moral theology. It is as if the last thirty years of scholarship in the Church never happened. Official approval of the text, in my opinion, would be more than a set-back, it would be a disaster.³¹²

Nevertheless, the *Catechism* was promulgated. Many received it in the same manner as Reese and his companions³¹³. Others accepted it in reverence and joy. Millions of copies were bought throughout the world. In the United States, the American Bishops

³⁰⁷ *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est*. Vincent of Lerins, *A Commonitory for the Antiquity of the Catholic Faith Against the Profane Novelties of All Heresies*, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/434lerins-canon.html>. Chapter 4, para. 3

³⁰⁸ *Universal Catechism Reader*, 8.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-11.

³¹⁰ This complaint was heard regarding the response to the *GCD*. One wonders what these critics believe the hierarchy of truths to be. Cardinal Ratzinger addresses this issue in *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism, Sidelights on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “Equally apparent is that the Catechism is wholly structured according to the principle of the hierarchy of truths as understood by the Second Vatican Council” (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 33. Cardinal Schönborn wrote in the *Introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “the ‘hierarchy of truths’ does not mean a principle of subtraction’ as if faith could be reduced to some essentials’ whereas the ‘rest’ is left free or even dismissed as not significant. The ‘hierarchy of truth...is a principle of organic structure’. It should not be confused with the degrees of certainty; it simply means that the different truths of faith are ‘organized’ around a center” (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 42.

³¹¹ *Universal Catechism Reader*, 10.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 11.

³¹³ The author of *DOA: The Ambush of the Universal Catechism* asks the questions, “By what authority were they claiming the right to second-guess the Catholic bishops in the preparation of a foundational document belonging to the latter in the first place? How did they suddenly become more qualified interpreters of what the Catholic tradition consists of than the bishops whose formal responsibility is to interpret that tradition” (56).

sought to make it a viable document for catechetical renewal.

“The publication of the Catechism together with the aforementioned interventions of the Magisterium [EN, CT, FC, etc.] necessitated a revision of the *General Catechetical Directory* so as to adapt this valuable theologico-pastoral instrument to new situations and needs.”³¹⁴ It was promulgated in August, 1997.

Conformity to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

The bishops of the United States desired that religious education textbooks be in conformity to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. At this point it is the only country to have done so. In all fairness, the United States, the consummate consumer society has more religious education textbook series than any other country. This desire for conformity has born great fruit. Nonetheless, the deficiencies have occurred.

Hierarchy of Truths

The doctrinal matter of the deficiencies subsist in the “hierarchy of truths”, a summary of the pivotal doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. The *GCD* explains the composition of this hierarchy.

In the message of salvation there is a certain hierarchy of truths (cf. UR, 11), which the Church has always recognized when it composed creeds or summaries of the truths of faith. This hierarchy does not mean that some truths pertain to faith itself less than others, but rather that some truths are based on others as of a higher priority, and are illumined by them. On all levels catechesis should take account of this hierarchy of the truths of faith.

These truths may be grouped under four basic heads: the mystery of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Creator of all things; the mystery of Christ the incarnate Word, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and who suffered, died, and rose for our salvation; the mystery of the Holy Spirit, who is present in the Church, sanctifying it and guiding it until the glorious coming of Christ, our Savior and Judge; and the mystery of the Church, which is Christ’s Mystical Body, in which the Virgin Mary holds the pre-eminent place.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ *GDC*, 7.

³¹⁵ *GCD*, 43.

It can be said that the textbooks were found deficient in teaching the hierarchy of truths. The hierarchy is referred to only in the Council's Decree on Ecumenism³¹⁶, which is often overlooked. The aim of ecumenism, the reunification of the Church, is essentially linked to catechesis, whose aims are understanding and conversion.

The hierarchy of truths comes from the Magisterium of the Church. *Dei Verbum* explains that its authority is exercised "in the name of Jesus Christ. Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant."³¹⁷ *Lumen Gentium* links it directly to revelation, "Furthermore, when the Roman Pontiff, or the body of bishops together with him, define a doctrine, they make the definition in conformity with revelation itself, to which all are bound to adhere and to which are obliged to submit..."³¹⁸

The "Decree on Ecumenism" states, "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only."³¹⁹ Ecumenism has itself suffered from many misunderstandings in both theology and in practical application. The Council fathers desired that all members of the Church must undertake the restoration of unity.³²⁰ To this end, they noted that, "Every renewal in the Church essentially consists in an increase fidelity to her own calling."³²¹

The term "fidelity" to the Church has many interpretations. This has led to polemical approaches to the life and doctrine of the Church. The decree warns that, "The manner and order in which Catholic belief is expressed should in no way become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren."³²² This would also be true in dialogue among the members of the Church. The document clearly states that it is "essential that the doctrine be clearly presented in its entirety."³²³ There is an assumption that those within the Church understand her doctrine, and hold it true in its entirety. It also

³¹⁶ Vatican II, "Decree on Ecumenism," *Unitatis Redintegratio*, November 21, 1964.

³¹⁷ *DV*, 10.

³¹⁸ *LG*, 25.

³¹⁹ *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 11.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

³²² *Ibid.*, 11.

³²³ *Ibid.*

states, “Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false irenicism which harms the purity of Catholic doctrine and obscures its genuine and certain meaning.”³²⁴

In an earlier paragraph the *Decree* spoke of the renewal that was taking place in the Church, including catechetics.³²⁵ Inauthentic renewal in catechetics, like inauthentic ecumenism, produces the same effects: a dilution of the life, doctrine, and worship of the Church that reduces all three to the least common denominator, a basic belief in Christ and a desire to be good. Renewal is necessary, but fidelity to truth is its hallmark. The GCD reminded catechists that, “...it becomes necessary to affirm the permanence of the faith and to present the message of salvation in renewed ways.”³²⁶

The Decree directs theologians engaged in ecumenical dialogue to do so with “love for the truth, with charity, and with humility”.³²⁷ It also cautions that when “comparing doctrines with one another [other denominations], they should remember that in Catholic Doctrine there exists an order, or “hierarchy” of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.”³²⁸

Both the *Catechism*³²⁹ and the *GDC* (which superseded the GCD in 1997) make reference to the hierarchy.

This message transmitted by catechetics has a “comprehensive hierarchical character”, which constitutes a coherent and vital synthesis of the faith. This is organized around the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, in a christocentric perspective, because this is “the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them”. Starting with this point, the harmony of the overall message requires a “hierarchy of truths”, in so far as the connection between each one of these and the foundation of the faith differs. Nevertheless, this hierarchy “does not mean that some truths pertain to Faith itself less than others, but rather that some truths are based on others as of a higher priority and are illumined by them”.³³⁰

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid., 6.

³²⁶ GCD, 2.

³²⁷ *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 11.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ CCC 90, 234. Both will be discussed in the context of revelation.

³³⁰ GDC, 114.

Canon Law

There is another direct result of Vatican II that receives little notice in catechesis – canon law. It would be necessary for a catechist preparing people for the reception of the sacraments to be familiar with canons regulating their reception. The first Synod of Bishops met to discuss the revision of Canon Law according to the tenets of the Second Vatican Council and Pope John Paul II promulgated the new Code in 1983.

The Code specifies the duties of the Church regarding the preservation of revealed truth.

Can. 747 §1. The Church, to which Christ the Lord has entrusted the deposit of faith so that with the assistance of the Holy Spirit it might protect the revealed truth reverently, examine it more closely, and proclaim and expound it faithfully, has the duty and innate right, independent of any human power whatsoever, to preach the gospel to all peoples, also using the means of social communication proper to it.³³¹

In the sections of the Code that follow, the bishop is designated at the chief catechist of the Diocese. First it states that pastors of souls have a “proper and serious duty”³³² to provide for catechesis, and that parents are obliged to “form their children in the faith,”³³³ it is to the Bishops that the greatest obligation is given.

Can. 775 §1. Having observed the prescripts issued by the Apostolic See, it is for the diocesan bishop to issue norms for catechetics, to make provision that suitable instruments of catechesis are available, even by preparing a catechism if it seems opportune, and to foster and coordinate catechetical endeavors.

To the dismay of some and pleasure of others, the American Bishops, took this canon seriously in the implementation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Conclusion

In 1970, Joseph Colomb, PSS wrote, “There is at the present time a real wave of consternation against catechesis.”³³⁴ While he admitted the subject was broad, he categorized the contested points as the following: catechetical method or model; content of catechesis; type of faith envisaged by catechesis; language of catechesis;

³³¹ *Code of Canon Law* (hereafter *CIC*).

³³² *Ibid.*, 773.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 774.

³³⁴ At that time, Colomb served as principal of the Institute of Pastoral Catechetics, Strasbourg. This article, entitled “Catechesis Contested” appeared in *Lumen Vitae* 25 (1970): 369.

subjects or receivers of catechesis.³³⁵ In 1971, the *Directory* was engaged in extrapolating what catechesis is and has been from the history and the teachings of the Church, and specifically from the teachings of Vatican II.

This explains why the theoretical aspect is given primary emphasis in this *Directory*, although, as will be evident, the practical aspect is by no means neglected. Such a course of action was adopted especially for the following reason: the errors which are not infrequently noted in catechetics today can be avoided only if one starts with the correct way of understanding the nature and purposes of catechesis and also the truths which are to be taught by it, with due account being taken of those to whom catechesis is directed and of the conditions in which they live.³³⁶

Vatican II emphasized the continuity of the faith. The continuity was emphasized again in the post-conciliar magisterial catechetical documents. Continuity in both areas did not mean stagnant uniformity in the process of handing on the teachings of the Church. It did reflect a consistency in the content of the faith as handed on by Jesus to his apostles and to the Church through the centuries. Immediately after the Council, and even during it, clergy, academics, and catechetical leaders sought to renew catechesis according to the tenets of the Council. Others broke the continuity. They used the “spirit of the Council” as their reason. Many established themselves as the catechetical authority in the United States. In most cases, it was their voice that was heard. And the question must be asked, “Where were the bishops?” Research shows that it is theologians who have the most effect on catechesis. The bishops made attempts to renew catechesis but in effect were unsuccessful until the promulgation of the Catechism. Since that time they have made serious strides, following in the footsteps of John Paul II, in catechetical renewal. Publishers of religious education textbooks seek to be found in Conformity to the *Catechism*. The United States was one of the first countries to publish a new national directory to coincide with the new GDC, and the bishops have published a national adult catechism. All this activity is evidence that the American bishops are seeking to rectify the damage of the past.

Chapter II will endeavor to describe the theological roots of the crisis in religious education.

³³⁵ Ibid., 369-70.

³³⁶ GDC, Foreword.

Chapter II

Revelation, the Response of Faith and Catechetics

Introduction

Chapter I offered evidence that the Magisterium's attempt to renew catechesis according to the Council were either ignored or rejected. The Foreword of the *General Catechetical Directory* states, "...the errors which are not infrequently noted in catechetics today can be avoided only if one starts with the correct way of understanding the nature and purposes of catechesis and also the truths which are to be taught by it."¹

Because the deficiencies in religious education textbooks are the fundamental articles of faith, it is necessary to look at the deposit of faith itself and how it is related to revelation and catechesis. This chapter will discuss that relationship in the context of Vatican II and the post-conciliar catechetical documents.

One needs to go to the ultimate source of catechesis in order to understand its nature and purpose – God. This chapter will briefly describe God's revelation of himself to man, ultimately through his Son, Jesus Christ. *Dei Verbum* provides the articulation of why and how God did this. While both answers will be looked at here, the why of revelation is the focus. The divine pedagogy, how God revealed himself, is the focus of Chapter IV, which deals with catechetical methodology. Ultimately God revealed himself because he loved the people he had created. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states,

The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love.²

The CCC quoted the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*.

¹ GCD, foreword.

² CCC, 25, citing *Roman Catechism*, Preface 11.

God revealed himself in love. He drew man ever closer to his himself, until union became possible, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."³ Consequently, handing on the deposit of faith should be a loving act that invites a response. The deposit, "the mirror in which we see God"⁴, is Christocentric and Trinitarian. The manner in which this is done and the response to it will be dissected in this chapter. The use of reason in the process of revelation and response of faith as articulated by Vatican II will then be analyzed. As a summary of the deposit of faith, similar to other Creeds present in the Church, the *Credo of the People of God* will then be looked at more for its origin than for its content, since it was written so closely after Vatican II.

Since the response elicited by revelation is the obedience of faith, the nature of religious assent should also be studied. Newman's *An Essay on the Grammar of Assent* offers an explanation which justifies a brief look at his understanding of notional and real assent. The post-conciliar understanding of the ecclesial vocation of the theologian determines what makes the work of theologians authentic in the mind of the Church, and provides the benchmark from which the authenticity of the theologians investigated in Chapters III and IV. This analysis led to a brief description of a *grammar of dissent* present in many of the key leaders of the catechetical renewal after the Council.

Divine Revelation

God can be known through reason.

The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason from created things; "for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom 1:20); nevertheless, it has pleased His wisdom and goodness to reveal Himself and the eternal decrees of His will to the human race in another and supernatural way, as the Apostle says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son" (Heb.1:1-2).⁵

³ Jn. 3:16.

⁴ *DV*, 7: "But in order to keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, 'handing over' to them 'the authority to teach in their own place.' This sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face (see 1 John 3:2)."

⁵ *Dei Filius*, Denziger, 1785.

In describing the Council's work in determining the roots of revelation, especially in regard to tradition, Ratzinger wrote, "By describing the activity of Jesus in relation of the Gospel not only as 'promulgating', but also as 'fulfilling', it plays down the narrow legal aspect to which the categorization of the Christian message under the idea of *nova lex* had ultimately led, which is behind the idea of promulgation."⁶ Jesus said "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished."⁷ Matthew records the "You have heard it said...but I say"⁸ passages that offer glimpses of the unique way in which he will fulfill the Mosaic law.

Dei verbum notes,

In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will (Eph. 1:9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (Eph. 2:18; 2 Peter 1:4). Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17) out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends (Ex. 33:11; John 15:14-15) and lives among them (Bar. 3:38), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself.⁹

In this fulfillment of the law, Jesus expresses the desire for intimacy that God has for man, Jesus Christ, God the Son made man, is the fullness of revelation. "By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation."¹⁰ The CCC, alluding to the prologue of John's Gospel, describes the nature of Jesus as the Word, "Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, his one utterance in whom he expresses himself completely."¹¹

In similar language, the *GCD* delineated the connection between revelation and catechesis.

⁶ Ratzinger, "Transmission of Divine Revelation, in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 3 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 181.

⁷ Mt. 5:17.

⁸ Mt. 5.

⁹ *DV*, 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

In the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, the General Council looked at revelation as the act by which God communicates himself in a personal way: "In his goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal himself and to make known the hidden purpose of his will . . . so that he may invite and take men into fellowship with himself" (DV, 2). God appears there as one who wishes to communicate himself, carrying out a plan which proceeds from love.

Catechesis, then, ought to take its beginning from this gift of divine love.¹²

Norms and Criteria for Catechesis

According to the *GCD*, the ultimate norm or criteria for catechesis is Christocentrism.

In articulating this, the *Directory* reflects Christocentric nature of revelation.

Christ Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, since he is the supreme reason why God intervenes in the world and manifests himself to men, is the center of the Gospel message within salvation history. Hence catechesis must necessarily be Christocentric.¹³

This Christocentrism cannot be merely theoretical but practical,

This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation.¹⁴

Acts of the Apostles records Jesus giving witness to this, just before his ascension into heaven. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."¹⁵ This power would be necessary for the apostles to obey Christ's last command, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."¹⁶

This passage is called the "great commission," and used for two millennia to describe the mandate of The Twelve, and subsequently the apostolic work of the entire Church.

¹¹ CCC, 102.

¹² GCD 10.

¹³ Ibid., 40.

¹⁴ DV, 2.

¹⁵ Acts 1.

¹⁶ Mt. 28.

“In preaching the Gospel they were to communicate the gifts of God to all men. This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline.”¹⁷ In addition, “God graciously arranged that the things he had done revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages, and be transmitted to all generations.”¹⁸

John Paul II reiterated this theme in *Catechesi Tradendae*.

The Church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks, for, before Christ ascended to His Father after His resurrection, He gave the apostles a final command - to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded. He thus entrusted them with the mission and power to proclaim to humanity what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the Word of Life. He also entrusted them with the mission and power to explain with authority what He had taught them, His words and actions, His signs and commandments. And He gave them the Spirit to fulfill this mission.

The nature and purpose of catechesis is derived from this. “Very soon the name of catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in His name, and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ. The Church has not ceased to devote her energy to this task.”¹⁹

Two key activities are explicit here - call and response.

At the origin of the catechist's vocation, therefore, apart from the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, there is a specific call from the Holy Spirit, a “*special charism recognized by the Church*” and made explicit by the Bishop's mandate. It is important for the catechist candidate to recognize the supernatural and ecclesial significance of this call, so as to be able to respond, like the Son of God, “*Here I come*” (Heb 10:7), or, like the prophet, “*Here I am, send me*” (Is 6:8).²⁰

¹⁷ DV, 7.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ CT, 1.

²⁰ Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, “Guide for Catechists,” 2.

“If we would like an idea of the teaching method employed by the first generation of Christians, we cannot do better than turn to St. Paul.”²¹ Paul considered himself to be set apart to preach the Gospel. Ananias’ hesitation to go to this man who was persecuting Christians was allayed by Jesus, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”²² After his Baptism, “in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’”²³

Paul frequently stated that his teaching did not come from himself. “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you.”²⁴ These words that introduce Paul’s account of the institution of the Eucharist serve as a synthesis of the process that catechesis has undertaken for two millennia.

Paul was certain that he had received a divine revelation through Jesus Christ.

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ...But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus.²⁵

Paul staked his life on this revelation, dying for it, as did Peter and all the apostles except John. Peter also gained unique knowledge of who Jesus was.

Jesus asked, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.’”²⁶

Peter wrote,

“Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who

²¹ Josef Andreas Jungmann, *The Good News and our Proclamation of the Faith*, trans. and ed. William. A. Huesman, S.J. (New York: W.H. Sadlier, 1962), 17.

²² Acts 9:15-16.

²³ Acts 9:20.

²⁴ 1 Cor. 11:23.

²⁵ Gal. 1:10-17.

²⁶ Mt. 16:15-17.

called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."²⁷

Martyrdom

The early Christians shared Peter and Paul's conviction: what they had been told by Jesus through the apostles was truly the Word of God. Jesus was the Word. It was worth living for, regardless of the rejection of family, Jewish and/or Roman persecution. It was worth dying for. Ignatius of Antioch wrote to Polycarp, "You must not be panic-stricken by those who have an air of credibility but who teach heresy. Stand your ground like an anvil under the hammer."²⁸

Some of them, so torn by scourging that the anatomy of their flesh was visible as far as the inner veins and arteries, endured with such patience that even the bystanders took pity and wept; others achieved such heroism that not one of them uttered a cry or a groan, thus showing all of us that at the very hour of their tortures the most noble martyrs of Christ were no longer in the flesh, but rather that the Lord stood by them and conversed with them.²⁹

The letter concludes with the following admonition,

We bid you farewell, brethren, as you live by the word of Jesus Christ according to the gospel, with whom be glory to God the Father and Holy Spirit, unto the salvation of his holy elect; just as the blessed Polycarp suffered martyrdom, in whose footsteps may it be our lot to be found in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.³⁰

Martyrs were the ultimate witnesses.³¹ The CCC defines martyrdom as

...the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude.³²

The CCC concludes with the words of Ignatius of Antioch, "Let me become the food of the beasts, through whom it will be given me to reach God."³³

²⁷ 1 Pet. 1:13-16.

²⁸ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to Polycarp* 3.

²⁹ *The Martyrdom of Saint Polycarp* 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

³¹ Etym. Greek *martyros*, witness, martyr. Hardon, *Pocket Catechism*, 244.

³² CCC, 2473.

³³ *Ibid.*, citing St. Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans* 4, 1.

Hardon defined martyrdom in the context of Christ's suffering, "After the example of Christ one does not resist one's persecutors when they use violence out of malice or hatred against Christ, or his Church, or some revealed truth of the Catholic religion."³⁴ "Christ reveals, first and foremost, that the frank and open acceptance of truth is the condition for authentic freedom: 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free' (Jn 8:32). This is truth which sets one free in the face of worldly power and which gives the strength to endure martyrdom."³⁵

John Paul also wrote,

The proclamation of the Gospel and the Christian testimony given in a life of suffering and martyrdom make up the summit of the apostolic life among Christ's disciples, just as the love for the Lord Jesus even to the giving of one's life constitutes a source of extraordinary fruitfulness for the building up of the Church. Thus the mystic vine bears witness to its earnestness in the faith, as expressed by St. Augustine: 'But that vine, as predicted by the prophets and even by the Lord himself, spread its fruitful branches in the world, and becomes the more fruitful the more it is watered by the blood of martyrs.'³⁶

And again,

Catechists are specialists, direct witnesses and irreplaceable evangelizers who, as I have often stated and experienced during my missionary journeys, represent the basic strength of Christian communities, especially in the young churches. The new Code of Canon Law acknowledges the tasks, qualities and qualifications of catechists.³⁷

Dei Verbum

Dei Verbum, the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, was promulgated by the Second Vatican Council to clarify the nature of divine revelation, and its two distinct modes of transmission.³⁸ "The idea of having a Constitution on the themes of revelation, Scripture and tradition goes back to the early beginnings of the preparations for the Council."³⁹ The question of revelation was not entirely settled by Trent or Vatican I. The debate during Vatican II, as Ratzinger recounts, "took place in

³⁴ Hardon, *Pocket Catechism*, 44.

³⁵ *Veritatis Splendor*, 87.

³⁶ *Christifidelis Laici*, 39.

³⁷ *Redemptoris Missio*, 73.

³⁸ CCC, 81.

³⁹ Ratzinger, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Origin and Background," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 3 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 155.

an atmosphere of restless theological ferment and sometimes almost risked being overwhelmed by it.”⁴⁰

Ratzinger listed three “motifs” in the debate on divine revelation. The first “...was the new view on the phenomenon of tradition, which had been developing, for various reasons, from the beginning of the last century.”⁴¹ The second was the “...theological problem of the application of critical historical methods to the interpretation of Scripture”.⁴² And the third he called the most positive one, “...the biblical movement that has grown stronger since the turn of the century and has already brought about a fundamentally new attitude to Scripture in large areas of Catholic Christendom, giving rise to a new familiarity with it and an ever-increasing tendency, both in theology and piety, to go back to it.”⁴³

Additionally, Ratzinger explains what was desired by three major constituencies present.

As far as the history of our Constitution immediately before the Council is concerned, we can see its main tendencies, as well as the main points of the Conciliar debate, from the comments that were made by the bishops’ conferences, the Holy Office and the Roman University faculties. Thus the Holy Office called for a clear and emphatic statement on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture and its interpretation by the Church, and especially emphasis on the historicity of the Gospels, as well as a statement that tradition contained more, in terms of content, than Scripture. Bishops requested doctrinal, defensive and pastoral sections; the wishes of the Roman universities showed a clear concept of a ‘Constitutio de fontibus Revelationis’.⁴⁴

The constitution was entitled *The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, rather than the *Sources of Revelation* as earlier discussion had proposed. Rene Latourelle, SJ, commented that the council chose not to debate the material content of Scripture and Tradition, leaving the question open for theologians to explore, “The Council, for its part, chose a different route, stressing rather the organic unity of Scripture, and

⁴⁰ Ibid. Ratzinger served as a peritus, an expert, at the Council, and served on various committees that constructed *Dei Verbum*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 157.

⁴³ Ibid., 158.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 159. The Holy Office was renamed Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith after the Council.

Tradition, as well as the intimate relationship between Scripture, Tradition, and the Church.”⁴⁵

On October 29, 1965, after almost five years of work, including the pre-conciliar discussion of the Theological Commission, the final draft of the Constitution was voted on, chapter by chapter, approved almost unanimously, and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965. The Council closed on December 8, 1965.

The content of *Dei Verbum* is thus normative for this discussion of divine revelation.

Studying the record of discussions among the bishops, of drafts of documents, and the proposals for change can, of course, aid us in understanding the final approved results. But it is the final documents as approved by the bishops and promulgated by the Pope that contain the official teaching of the Catholic Church. And Catholics have a duty to accept the teaching of the Council.⁴⁶

This organic connection of Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium is vital for catechetics.

A person mature in the faith knows the mystery of salvation revealed in Christ, and the divine signs and works which are witnesses to the fact that this mystery is being carried out in human history. It is, therefore, not sufficient for catechesis merely to stimulate a religious experience, even if it is a true one; rather, catechesis should contribute to the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan by preparing the faithful for the reading of Sacred Scripture and the learning of tradition.⁴⁷

The Constitution stressed the connection and communication between sacred tradition and sacred Scripture. “For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end.”⁴⁸ It continues, “Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God, committed to the Church.”⁴⁹ The deposit of faith is the content of catechesis.

In order to arrive at a cause(s) of the “deficiencies”, their relationship to the deposit of faith should be understood. The doctrinal content of the deficiencies subsist in the hierarchy of truths, the hierarchy of truths subsists in the deposit of faith. “Thus, no

⁴⁵ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1966), 454.

⁴⁶ McInerney, *What Went Wrong With Vatican II*, 23.

⁴⁷ GCD 24.

⁴⁸ *DV*, 9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

true catechist can lawfully, on his own initiative, make a selection of what he considers important in the deposit of faith as opposed to what he considers unimportant, so as to teach the one and reject the other.”⁵⁰

Revelation

The source of the deposit of faith is revelation.

The revelation of God’s word to humanity is the first reality: the first fact, the first mystery, the first category. The whole economy of salvation, in the order of knowledge, rests upon this mystery of God’s self-manifestation and love. Revelation is the original mystery; it communicates every other mystery; it is the manifestation of the plan of salvation which God had in mind from all eternity and which he realized in Jesus Christ.⁵¹

As important as it is, little in the way of theological discussion of revelation took place in the years before the Vatican II. This led to problems; Ratzinger’s earlier remarks about the origins of the documents give evidence as to what the concerns were.

Rene Latourelle, SJ and Gabriel Moran, FSC, both writing in 1966, posit similar explanations as to how the nature of revelation was thought of in the theological history of the Church, “Because revelation is so basic to the Christian religion it is more than likely that the Church has already understood much of the nature of revelation at the level of practice which is only now being thematized for theological inquiry.”⁵² Latourelle, studying the work of his contemporaries, noted that revelation is obvious.⁵³ But he adds, and this is very important in post-conciliar confusion, “...if the Church should cease to reflect upon the intervention of God in history and upon the signs of this intervention, she would eventually expose her teaching to the perils of fideism.”⁵⁴

Council of Trent

The Council of Trent was concerned with refuting the errors of the Protestant reformers, who made Scripture the sole authority, *sola scriptura*, and guidance in

⁵⁰ CT, 30.

⁵¹ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, p. 13.

⁵² Moran, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 23.

⁵³ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 14.

matters of faith and morals. "For its part, the Council of Trent was taken up with turning away the more immediate danger posed by a too exclusive attention to Scripture, to the detriment of the teaching Church and her living tradition."⁵⁵ It decreed,

...that with the abolishing of errors, the purity itself of the Gospel is preserved in the Church, which promised before through the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded "to be preached" by His apostles "to every creature" as the source of every saving truth and of instruction in morals [Matt. 28:19 ff., Mark 16:15], and [the Synod] clearly perceiving that this truth and instruction are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, which have been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the apostles themselves, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit, have come down even to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand, [the Synod] following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and holds in veneration with an equal affection of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament, since one God is the author of both, and also the traditions themselves, those that appertain both to faith and to morals, as having been dictated either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession.⁵⁶

The *Roman Catechism*, like the Tridentine decrees, only affirmed that revelation exists, and that it is contained in Scripture and Tradition. The nature of revelation is not explained.

Now all the doctrines in which the faithful are to be instructed are contained in the Word of God, which is found in Scripture and tradition. To the study of these, therefore, the pastor should devote his days and his nights, keeping in mind the admonition of St. Paul to Timothy, which all who have the care of souls should consider as addressed to themselves: Attend to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine, for all scripture divinely inspired is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work.⁵⁷

Vatican I

Vatican I followed the same course. *Dei Filius* divided the doctrine of divine revelation into three sections: the fact of positive supernatural revelation, the necessity of revelation, and the source of revelation. It stated that God can be known "...with

⁵⁴ Ibid. Hardon defines fideism as a "term applied to various theories that claim that faith is the only or ultimate source of all knowledge of God and spiritual things" (*Pocket Catechism*, 149).

⁵⁵ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 250.

⁵⁶ Denziger, 783.

⁵⁷ *Roman Catechism*, Introduction.

certitude by the natural light of human reason from created things”.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, “...it has pleased His wisdom and goodness to reveal Himself and the eternal decrees of His will to the human race in another and supernatural way, as the Apostle says: ‘God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son (Heb.1:1)’”.⁵⁹

Pius IX had written about the relationship between faith and reason in *Qui pluribus*. “For who does not know, or cannot know that all faith is to be given to God who speaks, and that nothing is more suitable to reason itself than to acquiesce and firmly adhere to those truths which it has been established were revealed by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived?”⁶⁰

Dei Filius declared that revelation is necessary not because reason is ineffective, “but because God in His infinite goodness has ordained man for a supernatural end, to participation, namely, in the divine goods which altogether surpass the understanding of the human mind, since ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him’ (1 Cor. 2:9).”⁶¹

Vatican I quoted the Council of Trent to describe the source of revelation, “furthermore, this supernatural revelation, according to the faith of the universal Church, as declared by the holy synod of Trent, is contained ‘in the written books and in the unwritten traditions which have been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself; or, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit have been handed down by the apostles themselves, and have thus come to us’” (Council of Trent, see n. 783).⁶²

Vatican II

The Council referenced its conciliar predecessors. “Therefore, following in the footsteps of the Council of Trent and of the First Vatican Council, this present

⁵⁸ *Dei Filius*, 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Qui pluribus*, Denziger, 1637.

⁶¹ *Dei Filius*, 2.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love.”⁶³ Ratzinger believed that the most important thing in the last sentence of the prologue was the “relation that is established here to the two previous Councils, Trent and Vatican I.”⁶⁴ He admitted that it may appear that the Council did not move beyond its predecessors, and stated that it, “in fact chiefly intended to allay the fears of the ‘conservative’ group and bring out the continuity of Vatican II with the previous councils – but a continuity that is not a rigid external identification with what had gone before, but a preservation of the old, established in the midst of progress.”⁶⁵ The reference to the earlier councils provides concrete evidence that the teaching of the Church, as it develops, does not disregard the teaching that has gone before. This cannot be underestimated.⁶⁶

Ratzinger continued,

It so happens that Chapters I and II of the text, in particular, can only be properly understood if constantly compared with the parallel text of Vatican I and Trent, and only if this is undertaken carefully in every instance can we know fully what is meant concretely by *inhaerere vestitiis*. We could probably best summarize its significance by using the term that has become common in exegesis: this Constitution is a *relecture* of the corresponding texts of Vatican I and Trent, in which what is written then is interpreted in terms of the present, and thus giving a new rendering of both its essentials and its insufficiencies.”⁶⁷

Latourelle wrote that the prologue to the constitution is sober yet profound, solemn and religious.⁶⁸ He stated that *Dei Verbum* was “first great document produced by Vatican II.”⁶⁹ Chronologically this is not true. It is theologically because revelation is the source of the Church’s teachings. Latourelle believed that the prologue serves, “as an introduction to the whole of the Council’s work.”⁷⁰ This is demonstrated in the

⁶³ *DV*, 1, referring to Augustine’s *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, 4,8.

⁶⁴ Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 168.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ It is, as Ratzinger makes clear, a principal part of *Dei Verbum* (this is also true of all the constitutions and decrees), and will be a vital element in the composition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Without presuming to offer a facile explanation for an either authentic or inauthentic renewal of catechesis, this observation lies at the crux of further discussions within this dissertation.

⁶⁷ Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 168-69.

⁶⁸ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 456.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

weight given to the document in its categorization as a “Dogmatic Constitution.” Only *Lumen Gentium* shares this category.

Dei Verbum, the Latin title of the Dogmatic Constitution gives it its authority. “This phrase, Word of God, refers first of all to revelation, that first intervention by which God steps out of his mystery and speaks to humanity to disclose to it the secrets of divine life and to communicate to it his plan of salvation.”⁷¹ Latourelle’s comments are consistent with the Prologue of John’s Gospel,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.⁷²

John gives further testimony to the Word made flesh.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”⁷³

This same passage is quoted in the Prologue to the constitution. “The text announces in biblical terms everything that is essential to the Constitution. Life which was in God, together with the Father, was made visible to us.”⁷⁴

Latourelle articulated a theological basis for what the *General Catechetical Directory* calls “the ministry of the Word” of which catechesis is a component. “The ministry of the Word takes many forms, including catechesis, according to the different conditions under which it is practiced and the ends which it strives to achieve.”⁷⁵

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Jn. 1:1-4, 14.

⁷³ 1 Jn. 1:1-3.

⁷⁴ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 456.

⁷⁵ GCD, 17.

Latourelle wrote that the attitude of the Council toward the Word is the same as that of the Magisterium, “it hears and proclaims the word of God.”⁷⁶ This is the process discussed previously. This process is consistent throughout 2000 years of Church teaching. “Like the whole Christian people, whose faith it shares, it first of all receives the word of the Lord with faith and reverence; but also, in virtue of the prophetic mission received from Christ, it is the herald of this world which it proclaims with the confidence of the apostles.”⁷⁷

Ratzinger used the concept of herald to describe what the Prologue of the constitution is doing.⁷⁸ The herald, *kerynx*, proclaims the Good News, the *kerygma*. The use of the passage from John was “probably chosen because it presents, in a brief summary, first of all the formal structure of the *kerygma*, identifying it as an announcement identifying it as an announcement that is based on historical witness – on oral and visual evidence – and thus points to the essential manifestation of Christian revelation, grounded as it is in the incarnation, and to the faith in it.”⁷⁹

Ratzinger, in fact, described the apostolate of the catechist - to become the herald. This idea of a kerygmatic catechesis was the catalyst for the work of Josef Jungmann, SJ, and his protégé, Johannes Hofinger, SJ. As noted in Chapter I, Hofinger collaborated with Sr. Maria de la Cruz Aymes in writing the *On Our Way Series* of catechetical texts in which kerygmatic catechesis is used. There is also a development of the use of the notion of *kerygma/kerynx* in the post-conciliar catechetical documents, culminating in the *General Directory for Catechesis* promulgated in 1997. The work of Jungmann and Hofinger will be analyzed in Chapter III.

St. John wrote to the early churches so that his “joy may be complete.”⁸⁰ The emotional response to the actual proclamation of the Gospel is rarely discussed, but it should not be underestimated. Jesus was joyful at the Last Supper, a solemn

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 167.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ 1 Jn. 1:1:4.

celebration. “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”⁸¹ St. Paul entreated the members of the Church in Philippi to,

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.⁸²

Chapter I of *Dei Verbum* is concerned with revelation itself. The CCC prefaces its discussion of the doctrine of divine revelation by speaking first of man’s capacity for God. It describes the relationship between God and man. “The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself.”⁸³ This movement is the intrinsic truth about man. Quoting *Gaudium et Spes*, the *Catechism* stresses that man’s dignity “rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God.”⁸⁴ GS stressed God’s initiative in this communion.

This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator.⁸⁵

This is germane to two of the deficiencies:

- Insufficient emphasis on God's initiative in the world, with a corresponding overemphasis on human action
- An inadequate sense of a distinctively Christian anthropology

Thousands of American children did not receive the initial truth about their origin and their dignity, and ultimately about God who never fails to call them to himself.

⁸¹ Jn. 15:11.

⁸² 1 Phil. 4:4-7. Peter also gives testimony to the joy received in the proclamation of the gospel. “By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:3-9).

⁸³ CCC, 27.

⁸⁴ *Gaudium et Spes* (hereafter, GS), 19.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

“Although man can forget God or reject him, he never ceases to call every man to seek him, so as to find life and happiness.”⁸⁶ Man’s knowledge of himself was disconnected from God who reveals himself and calls man into intimacy. Evidently the Council’s teaching was disconnected from the content of textbooks. “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him to come, Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling.”⁸⁷

The Trinity

Dei Filius and *Dei Verbum* present revelation in terms of an intimate relationship between God and man that was not present earlier. “It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will” (Eph 1:9); his will was that man should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the divine nature (Eph. 2:18; 2 Pt 1:4).⁸⁸ Revelation is Trinitarian. Christ is the central figure, the fullness of revelation, and yet revelation is both the work of the entire Trinity and reveals the entire Trinity to us in Christ. “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life...It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the ‘hierarchy of the truths of the faith.’”⁸⁹

Ratzinger focused on the Trinitarian nature of revelation. While *DV* stressed Christ, “...it does not present a one-sided Christocentric view.”⁹⁰ He explained that it is the sense expressed in the theology of St. Paul, “Christ stands at the center as the mediator...he enfolds in us the dimension of the Spirit, and our being in him means that at the same time that we have been led to the Father.”⁹¹

Recall here another deficiency:

- Insufficient attention to the Trinity and the Trinitarian structure of Catholic beliefs and teaching the centrality of Christ

⁸⁶ CCC, 30.

⁸⁷ GS, 22.

⁸⁸ DV, 2.

⁸⁹ CCC, 234.

⁹⁰ Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 172.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Revelation to Persons

Planning to make known the way of heavenly salvation, He went further and from the start manifested Himself to our first parents. Then after their fall His promise of redemption aroused in them the hope of being saved (see Gen. 3:15) and from that time on He ceaselessly kept the human race in His care, to give eternal life to those who perseveringly do good in search of salvation (see Rom. 2:6-7). Then, at the time He had appointed He called Abraham in order to make of him a great nation (see Gen. 12:2). Through the patriarchs, and after them through Moses and the prophets, He taught this people to acknowledge Himself the one living and true God, provident father and just judge, and to wait for the Saviour promised by Him, and in this manner prepared the way for the Gospel down through the centuries.⁹²

God became man to tell us the greatest truths about himself, and to address men as “friends.”⁹³ The depth of this friendship is recorded in John’s Gospel.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.⁹⁴

Latourelle commented on the personal aspect of revelation. “The text takes up the words of Vatican I, but it adopts a more *personalized* formation.”⁹⁵ He gives the reason for this, “In saying that the object of revelation is God himself, the text thus personalizes revelation: before making known something, that is, his plan for salvation, God reveals someone, himself.”⁹⁶

Ratzinger made a similar observation “...it is God himself, the person of God from whom revelation proceeds and to whom it returns, and thus revelation necessarily reaches – also with the person who receives it – into the personal center of man. It touches him in the depth of his being, not only in his individual faculties, in his will and understanding.”⁹⁷

⁹² DV, 3.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Jn. 15:12-15.

⁹⁵ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 458.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ratzinger, “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,” 171.

The fact that Vatican II expanded the understanding of revelation from Vatican I demonstrates a few things. As the early passage from Ratzinger's commentary of the Prologue to *Dei Verbum* notes, continuity in the Church's teaching is seen. At the same time, "There is a growth of into the realities and words that are being passed on."⁹⁸ The *GCD* provides a concise summary of this phenomenon, "Believers of our time are certainly not in all respects like believers of the past. This is why it becomes necessary to affirm the permanence of the faith and to present the message of salvation in renewed ways."⁹⁹

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27). He also "... wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only begotten Son. By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him, and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity."¹⁰⁰ In addition, "Revelation makes known to us the state of original holiness and justice of man and woman before sin: from their friendship with God flowed the happiness of their existence in paradise."¹⁰¹

His gratuitous benevolence was put to the test.¹⁰²

Although set by God in the state of rectitude, man, enticed by the evil one, abused his freedom at the very start of history... Often refusing to acknowledge God as his source man has also upset the relationship that should link him to his last end; and at the same time he has broken the right order that should reign within himself as well as between himself and other men and all creatures.¹⁰³

And still the benevolence of God was manifested. "After the fall he buoyed up with the hope of salvation, by promising redemption; and he has never ceased to take care of the human race."¹⁰⁴ The *Catechism* synthesizes what has been said concerning revelation, original sin and Jesus Christ:

⁹⁸ *DV*, 8.

⁹⁹ *GCD*, 2.

¹⁰⁰ *CCC*, 52.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 384.

¹⁰² "The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place *at the beginning of the history of man*" (*ibid.*, 390).

¹⁰³ *GS*, 13.

¹⁰⁴ *DV*, 3.

The doctrine of original sin is, so to speak, the "reverse side" of the Good News that Jesus is the Savior of all men, that all need salvation, and that salvation is offered to all through Christ. The Church, which has the mind of Christ, knows very well that we cannot tamper with the revelation of original sin without undermining the mystery of Christ.¹⁰⁵

The deficiencies reflect a lack of understanding of these points.

- An obscured presentation of the centrality of Christ in salvation history and insufficient emphasis on the divinity of Christ
- Deficiency in the teaching of original sin and sin in general

In the light of the discussion on original sin, the documents make it clear that revelation is directed to salvation. "The most intimate truth which this revelation gives us about God and the salvation of man shines forth in Christ, who is himself both the mediator and the sum total of revelation."¹⁰⁶ It should be borne in mind that Jesus accomplishes the work that the Father sent him to accomplish by both words and deeds.

Hence, Jesus Christ, sent as a man among men, speaks the words of God, and accomplishes the saving work which the Father gave him to do...he did this by the total fact of his presence and self-manifestation – by words and works, signs and miracles, but above all by his death and glorious resurrection from the dead, and finally by sending the Spirit of truth. He revealed that God was with us, to deliver us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to eternal life.¹⁰⁷

God the Son became man to tell us about the Father and draw us to him, in the Spirit. Jesus Christ himself must be seen as one entity. The hypostatic union which came into existence at the moment of the incarnation cannot be separated. The truth of two natures, one Person has been a source of contention since the beginning of the Church. The teaching of the early Church, canonized in the Nicene Creed, remains the teaching of the Church.

Despite Christological clarity expressed not only in *Dei Verbum*, but consistently in each of the Conciliar constitutions and decrees, Paul VI felt it necessary to write the *Creed of the People of God*, which "repeats in substance, with some developments called for by the spiritual condition of our time, the creed of Nicea, the creed of the

¹⁰⁵ CCC, 389.

¹⁰⁶ DV, 2.

¹⁰⁷ DV, 4.

immortal tradition of the holy Church of God.”¹⁰⁸ The Credo, both its content and the reasons for its promulgation will be discussed in later in this chapter.

Response of Faith

“The obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26, cf. Rom. 1:5) must be given to God as he reveals himself.”¹⁰⁹ *DV* states that the Word of God was heard with reverence. This denotes an attitude that is catalytic in the obedient response to revelation. “By faith man freely commits his entire self to God, making ‘the full submission of his intellect and will to God who reveals’ and willingly assenting to the revelation given by him.”¹¹⁰

The dialogic movement of revelation and response of faith is necessary for the Church, and therefore is of the utmost and crucial importance to catechetics. The GCD addressed this necessity.

By faith man accepts revelation, and through it he consciously becomes a sharer in the gift of God. The obedience of faith must be offered to the God who reveals. By this, man, with full homage of his mind and will, freely assents to the Gospel of the grace of God (cf. Acts, 20, 24). Instructed by faith, man, through the gift of the Spirit, comes to contemplate and savor the God of love, the God who has made known the riches of his glory in Christ (cf. Col. 1, 26). Indeed, a living faith is the beginning in us of eternal life in which the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2, 10) will at last be seen unveiled.¹¹¹

In *CT* John Paul II placed revelation/response of faith into the context of catechesis.

Nevertheless, the specific aim of catechesis is to develop, with God's help, an as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful, young and old. It is in fact a matter of giving growth, at the level of knowledge and in life, to the seed of faith sown by the Holy Spirit with the initial proclamation and effectively transmitted by Baptism.¹¹²

Later, he noted that the “yes to Christ” has two levels. “It consists in surrendering to the word of God and relying on it, but it also means, at a later stage, endeavoring to

¹⁰⁸ Paul VI, *Credo of the People of God*, 2.

¹⁰⁹ *DV*, 5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ GCD, 15.

know better and better the profound meaning of this word.”¹¹³ If the Christian does come to know Christ in a deeper way, his initial response could be a matter of the intellect but not of the heart. Catechesis is thus necessary for it draws the person to a love of God. It helps to satisfy the desire to know more about him and to keep this love alive.

The response to God’s revelation is itself God’s gift. “Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth.”¹¹⁴ Latourelle stressed the fact that God provides the grace both to listen and respond. “It is not enough for the Gospel teaching to echo in his ear; the action of grace must also precede and assist in moving him *to believe (ad credendum)* and giving him delight *in believing (in credendo)*.”¹¹⁵

Latourelle chooses the phrase “to echo,” the root of the word “catechize.” Therefore just as it is insufficient for the initial proclamation of the Gospel to “to echo,” it is insufficient for the catechesis “to echo in his ear.” There must be a personal response, since the Person(s) of God reveals himself to the human person, and the human person responds to the Divine Person. “Thus, through revelation God *comes* toward man, condescends, and opens to him the secrets of his intimate life with a view toward reciprocal love. Through faith, man *turns* towards God and gives himself to God in friendship.”¹¹⁶

The *GCD* refers almost entirely to *DV* in its discussion of revelation and the response of faith. The relationship is discussed in a stronger way in *Catechesi Tradendae*. Bearing in mind all that had been said about the nature of revelation and its fullness in Jesus Christ, John Paul II, in what is perhaps the most important paragraph of the document states that,

¹¹² *CT*, 20.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *DV*, 5.

¹¹⁵ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 470.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

In the first place, it is intended to stress that at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, 'the only Son from the Father...full of grace and truth', who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever. It is Jesus who is 'the way, and the truth, and the life', and Christian living consists in following Christ, the *sequela Christi*.

The primary and essential object of catechesis is, to use an expression dear to St. Paul and also to contemporary theology, 'the mystery of Christ'.¹¹⁷

Thus the "the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity."¹¹⁸ Catechesis, like revelation, is Christocentric. And like revelation, it is a Trinitarian Christocentrism.

Just as Christ is the center of the history of salvation, the mystery of God is the center from which this history takes its origin and to which it is ordered as to its last end. The crucified and risen Christ leads men the Father by sending the Holy Spirit upon the People of God. For this reason the structure of the whole content of catechesis must be theocentric and Trinitarian: through Christ, to the Father, in the Spirit.¹¹⁹

John Paul stressed just how Christocentric catechesis must be.

We must therefore say that in catechesis it is Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught - everything else is taught with reference to Him - and it is Christ alone who teaches - anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips.¹²⁰

Subsequently not only the content must be rooted in Christ, the catechist must be rooted in Christ. "...every catechist must constantly endeavor to transmit by his teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus."¹²¹ This must be what is passed on to those being catechized.

He will not seek make himself the focus of his teaching on Christ and not on himself. Above all, he will not try to inculcate his personal opinions and options as if they expressed Christ's teaching and the lessons of His life. Every

¹¹⁷ CT, 5.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ GCD, 41.

¹²⁰ CT, 6.

¹²¹ Ibid.

catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me.'¹²²

This attitude has not been embraced by all. Michael Novak opined,

It was as though the world (or at least the history of the Church) were now to be divided into only two periods, pre-Vatican II and post-Vatican II. Everything "pre" was then pretty much dismissed, so far as authority mattered. For the most extreme, to be a Catholic now meant to believe more or less anything one wished to believe, or at least in the sense in which one personally interpreted it.¹²³

Another aspect of faith should be noted here, that is the differentiation between *fides qua* and *fides quae*. The *GCD* noted the differences,

Faith, the maturing of which is to be promoted by catechesis (cf. n. 21), can be considered in two ways, either as the total adherence given by man under the influence of grace to God revealing himself (the faith by which one believes), or as the content of revelation and of the Christian message (the faith which one believes). These two aspects are by their very nature inseparable, and a normal maturing of the faith assumes progress of both together. The two can, however, be distinguished for reasons of methodology.¹²⁴

In discussing the tasks of catechesis, the *GDC* went further.

Who has encountered Christ desires to know him as much as possible, as well as to know the plan of the Father which he revealed. Knowledge of the faith (*fides quae*) is required by adherence to the faith (*fides qua*). Even in the human order the love which one person has for the other causes that person to wish to know the other all the more. Catechesis, must, therefore, lead to "the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan", by introducing the disciples of Jesus to a knowledge of Tradition and of Scripture, which is '*the sublime science of Christ*'. By deepening knowledge of the faith, catechesis nourishes not only the life of faith but equips it to explain itself to the world. The meaning of the Creed, which is a compendium of Scripture and of the faith of the Church, is the realization of this task.¹²⁵

In the section on catechetical methodology, the *GDC* states, "Catechesis, which is therefore active pedagogy in the faith, in accomplishing its tasks,

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Novak, "The Rescue of Vatican II," 32.

¹²⁴ *GCD*, 36.

¹²⁵ *GDC*, 83.

cannot allow itself to be inspired by ideological considerations or purely human interests.”¹²⁶ Therefore, catechesis is to:

- “to promote a progressive and coherent synthesis between full adherence of man to God (*fides qua*) and the content of the Christian message (*fides quae*);
- to develop all the dimensions of faith through which it conveys faith which is known, celebrated, lived and prayed;
- to move the person to abandon himself "completely and freely to God": intelligence, will, heart and memory;
- to help the person to discern the vocation to which the Lord calls him.¹²⁷

Reason

In 1846, Pius IX had written, “And so, human reason, knowing clearly and openly from these most splendid and equally strong proofs that God is the author of the same faith, can proceed no further; but, having completely cast aside and removed every difficulty and doubt, it should render all obedience to this faith, since it holds as certain that whatever faith itself proposes to man to be believed or to be done, has been transmitted by God.”¹²⁸

Both Trent and Vatican I asserted that faith is the response to revelation. In *DF*, the response of faith immediately follows the sections on revelation. “Since man is wholly dependent on God as his Creator and Lord, and since created reason is completely subject to uncreated truth, we are bound by faith to give full obedience of intellect and will to God who reveals.”¹²⁹ It asserts however that those things revealed by God are not true because the truth has been perceived by reason, “but because of the authority of God Himself who reveals them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. For, ‘faith is,’ as the Apostle testifies, ‘the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not’ (Heb. 11:1).”¹³⁰

¹²⁶ *GDC*, 144.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Qui pluribus*, Denziger, 1639.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* DS 1789.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

It could appear that *DF*, in canonizing revelation as supreme over reason's ability to know God deeply, disregarded reason. This is not the case. Faith and reason, *fides et ratio*, have been a part of the teaching of the Church since the time of the Fathers, especially Augustine. Anselm gave theology an anthem, so to speak: *fides quaerens intellectum*, faith seeking understanding¹³¹.

The *GCD* held that, "The greatest way the faithful can help the atheistic world is by the witness of a life which agrees with the message of Christ's love and of a living and mature faith that is manifested by works of justice and charity (cf. GS, 21). However, the right use of human reason may not be neglected."¹³²

The *GDC* makes direct reference to this under the heading of the functions and forms of the ministry of the word, which includes catechesis.

The theological function ...seeks to develop understanding of the faith and is to be situated in the dynamic of "*fides quaerens intellectum*," that is, of belief which seeks to understand. Theology, in order to fulfill this function, needs to confront philosophical forms of thought, various forms of humanism and the human sciences, and dialogue with them. It is articulated whenever "the systematic treatment and the scientific investigation of the truths of the Faith" are promoted.¹³³

Martin Luther had little use for reason. He held *Sola Scriptura* – *Sola Gratia* – *Sola Fide* (Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone).¹³⁴ In this he denied Tradition, and held that salvation came through grace not good works; thus faith alone was necessary. In his last Sermon in Wittenberg, January 17, 1546 he said, "But since the devil's bride, Reason, that pretty whore, comes in and thinks she's wise, and what she says, what she thinks, is from the Holy Spirit, who can help us then? Not judges, not doctors, no king or emperor, because reason is the Devil's greatest whore."¹³⁵ "You cursed whore, shut up!"¹³⁶ In an earlier sermon, he blamed the universities, "those schools of the devil, continue to rave and not only extol the natural light, but also

¹³¹ Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, PL 153, 225A.

¹³² *GCD*, 49.

¹³³ *GDC*, 51.

¹³⁴ "Reformation," in *Theological Encyclopedia*, 326ff.

¹³⁵ Martin Luther, "Last Sermon in Wittenburg," Luther's Works, vol. 51, *Sermons*, ed. and trans. John W Doberstein, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 380.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 376

establish it, claiming that it is good, useful, and necessary for knowledge of Christian faith.”¹³⁷

The antithesis of this came during the Enlightenment. Approximately one hundred years after the Council of Trent, new ideas were emerging in Europe. Instead of faith alone, thinking moved to reason alone. “...it reached its high-water mark in French rationalism and materialism, and found political expression in the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century.”¹³⁸ “The Deist, Voltaire, in the name of the Enlightenment declared war on the Church, on its dogmas, its ethics, its traditions, and its clergy.”¹³⁹ At the “high-point” of the revolution an actress was enthroned on the high altar of Notre Dame Cathedral as the “Goddess of Reason”, and churches, having their Catholic status stripped away by the government, became “temples of reason.”¹⁴⁰ Thousands of priests were lost to France, through apostasy or martyrdom.

The Enlightenment has been characterized “...as the beginning of the really modern period of European culture, in contrast to the ecclesiastical and theological culture which had hitherto been prominent.”¹⁴¹ Bornkamm wrote “Today we often look back on that epoch of the human spirit with a certain contempt and estrangement, for since then the unshakable faith in reason and optimistic assurance of conquest typical of that time have in turn become deeply questionable.”¹⁴² He makes a plausible point that relates to an over-reaction to the difficulties in religious education that resembled Catholic fundamentalism. “A Christianity that so fears for its faith that it avoids the questions that the truth-seeking mind must ask, no longer needs to wonder that the message that it owes to the world now is disposed of as always an outdated word of the past, having no power to conquer or convince.”¹⁴³

In 1846, Pius IX addressed the problem caused by this approach to knowledge,

Hence, by a preposterous and deceitful kind of argumentation, they never cease to invoke the power and excellence of human reason, to proclaim it

¹³⁷ Martin Luther, “The Gospel for the Festival of Epiphany”, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 52 Sermons, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1974), 194

¹³⁸ *Theological Encyclopedia*, 328.

¹³⁹ Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 273.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 292-95.

¹⁴¹ *Theological Encyclopedia*, 328.

¹⁴² Bornkamm, *Early Christian Experience*, trans. Paul L. Hammer (London: SCM Press, 1969), 1.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

against the most sacred faith of Christ, and, what is more, they boldly prate that it (faith) is repugnant to human reason. Certainly, nothing more insane, nothing more impious, nothing more repugnant to reason itself can be imagined or thought of than this.¹⁴⁴

He continued,

For, even if faith is above reason, nevertheless, no true dissension or disagreement can ever be found between them, since both have their origin from one and the same font of immutable, eternal truth, the excellent and great God, and they mutually help one another so much that right reason demonstrates the truth of faith, protects it, defends it; but faith frees reason from all errors and, by a knowledge of divine things, wonderfully elucidates it, confirms, and perfects it [cf. n. 1799].¹⁴⁵

There is no simple definition of the Enlightenment, and its characteristics differ from region to region, country to country. “Lacking any rigid system, indeed self-contradictory to the point of complete amorphousness...it influenced every area of life and culture by striving for mathematical abstraction, rational clarity, order and progress.”¹⁴⁶ One commonality is the centrality of man and his fulfillment. This was achieved through “education, *cultura animi*, humanity, civilization”¹⁴⁷. “For this purpose supernatural revelation and grace seemed hardly necessary.”¹⁴⁸ Society would be improved by the “cultivation of the mind” rather than any moral or ethical restrictions.

The effect of the Enlightenment is not easily definable, “But we can see unmistakably the tendency to rationalize religion...to humanize it as ethical deism, to reduce confessions to a common denominator of ‘natural religion’, and to dissolve theology into philosophy of religion.”¹⁴⁹ However, “Despite a growing religious indifference and a hostility to revelation and the Church ...it would be inadequate to stress anti-supernaturalism and irreligion as its main features.”¹⁵⁰ It had influenced Christian Churches and was tied to them, keeping “18th century deism, pantheism, militant atheism and hatred of the Church within bounds.”¹⁵¹ One more point should be noted,

¹⁴⁴ *Qui pluribus*, Denziger, 1635.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Theological Encyclopedia*, 428.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 429.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

“It was chiefly in Protestant countries that a distinctive Enlightenment Christianity spread, with its characteristic retreat from dogmas, sacraments, ceremonies, its faith in providence, its obligation to ‘virtue’, its tendency to reconcile science and culture; but it happened in Catholic countries too.”¹⁵²

In the light of the deliberations of Vatican I, Latourelle observed,

If it is true that rationalism derives from Protestantism, it is equally certain that it was helped in its development by many important factors: by the Cartesian philosophy which broke with authority and tradition, by the moral philosophism and pantheism of Spinoza, which *a priori* excludes all revealed religion, by the German Kantian philosophy which confuses theology with philosophy and Christian morality with natural ethics, by the English experimental philosophy, finally which claimed to be restricted solely to the laws and observations of reason and nature. Thus the Council can speak of a “reign of reason and nature.”¹⁵³

The Council was convinced of the necessity of reason, while at the same time explaining its limits while dealing with heresy and a growing ‘liberalism’ among the Church’s theologians. It is important to look at the Council’s wording rather than paraphrase, since much of the teaching of the Church concerning revelation as defined by Vatican I is carried into *Dei Verbum*. This understanding is crucially important for catechetics and is reflected in the post Vatican II documents.

¹⁵² Ibid.: “The distinctively Catholic Enlightenment ...brought about a renewal of Church life as early as the 18th century, particularly in the Catholic states of Germany. Without this renewal- taking the form of advances in positive historical and exegetical methods, improvements in the education, discipline and morality of the clergy, the struggle against superstition and credulity, the decrease in the number of festivals and processions, reform of the liturgy, catechesis and pastoral work, the furtherance of popular education and charitable works – and the 19th-century restoration (e.g., Clemens Wenceslaus Saxony, Max Franz of Austria, Ludwig of Erthal) would have been impossible. The Catholic Enlightenment, marked by efforts to establish contact with the development of culture and science which were generally little influenced by Catholicism, and by the longing for tolerance and the reunion of the Church, were not untainted by destructive and heterodox features (rejection of the revelation-based authority of God and the Church, impoverishments of worship, devaluation of contemplation.” These years were still the years of the Counter-reformation age of saints, especially those who reformed seminary life, or founded religious communities for the purposes of education such as St. John Baptist de la Salle, who founded the Christian Brothers in 1680, American-born St. Elizabeth who founded the Sisters of Charity in the United States, the first American founded religious congregation, and is called the founder of the American Catholic Schools system. Bokenkotter remarks, “And it was a great calamity for the Church when the Jesuits were suppressed in 1763, since they offered the Church the best hope of leading the Church to a more positive relationship with the Enlightenment (*A Concise History*, 274).

¹⁵³ Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 255-256. Latourelle referring to the Prologue of *Dei Filius* which was not suggesting that the leaders of the Protestant Reformation directly caused rationalism, but in the devolvment of the main Protestant churches into numerous sects, many of whom ceased to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior or the Bible’s divine inspiration. Latourelle is commenting on the Council’s statement.

And, indeed, reason illustrated by faith, when it zealously, piously, and soberly seeks, attains with the help of God some understanding of the mysteries, and that a most profitable one, not only from the analogy of those things which it knows naturally, but also from the connection of the mysteries among themselves and with the last end of man; nevertheless, it is never capable of perceiving those mysteries in the way it does the truths which constitute its own proper object.¹⁵⁴

The Council then noted that faith and reason were both distinct and inseparable.

But, although faith is above reason, nevertheless, between faith and reason no true dissension can ever exist, since the same God, who reveals mysteries and infuses faith, has bestowed on the human soul the light of reason; moreover, God cannot deny Himself, nor ever contradict truth with truth. But, a vain appearance of such a contradiction arises chiefly from this, that either the dogmas of faith have not been understood and interpreted according to the mind of the Church, or deceitful opinions are considered as the determinations of reason. Therefore, "every assertion contrary to the truth illuminated by faith, we define to be altogether false" (Lateran Council V, see n. 738.)¹⁵⁵

John Paul II clarified the relationship between faith and reason in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth - in a word, to know himself - so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves."¹⁵⁶ He states the necessity of such an encyclical. "Therefore, following upon similar initiatives by my Predecessors, I wish to reflect upon this special activity of human reason. I judge it necessary to do so because, at the present time in particular, the search for ultimate truth seems often to be neglected. Modern philosophy clearly has the great merit of focusing attention upon man."¹⁵⁷ While praising the efforts of philosophy to do so, he has concerns about conclusions. Subsequently,

It has happened therefore that reason, rather than voicing the human orientation towards truth, has wilted under the weight of so much knowledge and little by little has lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being. Abandoning the investigation of being, modern philosophical research has concentrated instead upon human knowing. Rather than make use of the human capacity to know the truth, modern philosophy has preferred to accentuate the ways in which this capacity is limited and conditioned.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ *De Filius*, Denzinger, 1796.

¹⁵⁵ *Dei Filius*, Denzinger 1797.

¹⁵⁶ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Salutation.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Latourelle noted that “The Council thus avoids two incomplete perceptions of faith: that of faith-homage, personal but without content; and that of faith-assent, doctrinal but depersonalized. Christian faith is both gift and assent.”¹⁵⁹ Assent to the deposit of faith became one of the key issues in the post-Conciliar Church. This will be analyzed in further sections of this chapter. However, at this point, the condition of deposit in the light of the Council needs further illumination.

Credo of the People of God

John Paul II wrote that the *Credo of the People of God* “is a sure point of reference for the content of catechesis.”¹⁶⁰ He continued, “In the Creed of the People of God, proclaimed at the close of the 19th centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul, my predecessor Paul VI decided to bring together the essential elements of the Catholic Faith, especially those that presented greater difficulty or risked being ignored.”¹⁶¹ And yet, in personal experience, not that many people were aware of it then or now.

The *Credo* is similar to the Athanasian Creed, an amplification of the Nicene Creed. Athanasius was not the author, but it does reflect his fervor in defending the faith. Newman called the *Athanasian Creed*, to which he makes frequent reference in the *Grammar of Assent*, “the war-song of faith, with which we warn first ourselves, and then each-other and then all those that are within its hearing, and the hearing of the Truth, who our God is, and how we much worship Him, and how vast our responsibility will be, if we know what to believe, and yet believe not.”¹⁶² Perhaps Paul VI considered the *Credo* as his war-song in the battle after the Council.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁶⁰ *CT*, 28.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 117.

¹⁶³ Paul VI was often vilified for his conservatism, especially after the promulgation of *Humanae Vitae*. The *Credo* shows his deeply catechetical side. The Most Rev. Lucas Moreira Neves described his impressions as he listened to the weekly Wednesday audiences of Paul VI, which were, in effect, catechesis. “Well, I thought, what can be more beautiful on the evangelical plane than this. What despite difficulty is being done nearly everywhere in the Church by the old parish priest in the country, the mother of a family with her children, the school mistress among goodness knows how many difficulties, the catechist in the most distant missionary posts, is also done by him who has received from the Lord the vocation, the charism of the ministry of Peter....Paul VI’s catechesis: this is certainly the fruit of a personal pastoral outlook which is, moreover, reflected in an unmistakable way. But it is above all the fruit and expression of a deep awareness of his office as the successor of Peter. (“Paul

The *Credo of the People of God* was promulgated in 1968. It came at the end of the Year of Faith. In his homily, Paul showed determination to remain faithful to the tenets of the faith.

With this solemn liturgy we end the celebration of the nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and thus close the Year of Faith. We dedicated it to the commemoration of the holy apostles in order that we might give witness to our steadfast will to be faithful to the deposit of faith which they transmitted to us, and that we might strengthen our desire to live by it in the historical circumstances in which the Church finds herself in her pilgrimage in the midst of the world.¹⁶⁴

The preface to the profession of faith shows his deep concern for the state of the Church since the close of the Council. He offers the reason for such an undertaking:

“...we deem that we must fulfill the mandate entrusted by Christ to Peter, whose successor we are, the last in merit; namely, to confirm our brothers in the faith.”¹⁶⁵

As he proceeds, Paul VI demonstrates the same humility and confidence that were characteristic of John XXIII.

With the awareness, certainly of our human weakness, yet with the strength impressed on our spirit by such a command, we shall accordingly make a profession of faith, pronounce a creed which, without being strictly speaking a dogmatic definition, repeats in substance, with some developments called for by the spiritual condition of our time, the creed of Nicea, the creed of the immortal tradition of the holy Church of God.¹⁶⁶

Kevane stated that there is a “direct line of doctrinal development, unchanged in meaning, from the Nicene Creed of the fourth century to the Creed of the People of God in the present years since Vatican II.”¹⁶⁷ And he notes that there was a similar direct line from the Apostles’ Creed to the Nicene Creed.¹⁶⁸

Paul’s introductory comments provide a remarkable commentary on his awareness of the state of the immediate post-conciliar Church.

In making this profession, we are aware of the disquiet which agitates certain modern quarters with regard to the faith. They do not escape the influence of a

VI’s Catechesis: A Bishop’s Reflection,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English, 26 January, 1978, 9).

¹⁶⁴ Paul VI, Credo Homily.

¹⁶⁵ *Credo*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Paul VI, Credo Homily.

¹⁶⁷ Kevane, *Creed and Catechetics* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1978), xv.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*.

world being profoundly changed, in which so many certainties are being disputed or discussed. We see even Catholics allowing themselves to be seized by a kind of passion for change and novelty. The Church, most assuredly, has always the duty to carry on the effort to study more deeply and to present, in a manner ever better adapted to successive generations, the unfathomable mysteries of God, rich for all in fruits of salvation. But at the same time the greatest care must be taken, while fulfilling the indispensable duty of research, to do no injury to the teachings of Christian doctrine. For that would be to give rise, as is unfortunately seen in these days, to disturbance and perplexity in many faithful souls.¹⁶⁹

In the *Credo*, Paul demonstrates his desire to be faithful to the whole patrimony of the Faith. Besides a major doctrinal excursus on Jesus, the *Credo* proclaims belief in: Trinity, Church and Magisterium, Christian anthropology, God's initiative in the world, grace, sacraments, original sin and sin in general, Christian Moral life, and eschatology. Once more, "How did the deficiencies happen?" Was it by a failure to look to the Church for the truth? Or was it a rejection of Church teaching?

The Pontiff sought to make the doctrine the Church absolutely clear to the People of God. "We have wished our profession of faith to be a high degree complete and explicit, in order that it may respond in a fitting way to the need of light felt by so many faithful souls, by all the world, to whatever spiritual family they belong, who are in search of the truth."¹⁷⁰

The Dutch Catechism

Kevane claimed that one of the remote causes of *Credo* was the publication of the "Dutch Catechism".¹⁷¹ It is subtle in his introduction to the *Credo* in *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, and more direct in the introduction to *Creed and Catechetics*,

A far reaching and well-articulated movement of doubt and denial has surfaced in the field of religious education. It was especially visible in the New Catechism, the publication which, drawn to the attention of the Holy See, became the immediate occasion of the sequence of events which led to that contemporary and quite fully developed profession of the apostolic faith which is now known everywhere as the Creed of the People of God.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Paul, *Credo* homily; also *Credo*, 4.

¹⁷⁰ *Credo*, 7.

¹⁷¹ Kevane, *Creed and Catechetics*, xlix.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, xv.

The real name of this catechism was *De Nieuwe Katechismus* (The New Catechism). It is usually referred to as the “Dutch Catechism,” since it was the product of the Bishops of the Netherlands. It was published in 1966 and available in English by 1968. The desire of the Dutch Bishops was to find a substitute for earlier catechisms in which the descriptions of doctrine were short in order to promote easy memorization. They wanted to “preach Christ’s message through ordinary language...and to throw light on present-day questions.”¹⁷³

Charles Kaiser wrote that in the 60’s, “We were free to experiment and anything seemed possible: Everything could be changed.”¹⁷⁴ Commenting on religion, he continued, “The kids I did know who got formal religious training were hardly more likely to be believers than I was. Especially to young Catholics, the old fashioned orthodoxies seemed utterly implausible in the nuclear age.”¹⁷⁵

The *Dutch Catechism* was an instant best seller. The reasons for this were numerous. In the end it may have been just one or two. One is that in the uncertainty after the Council people were looking for a body of truth. They were familiar with catechisms, although the *Dutch Catechism* resembles a tome like the *Roman Catechism*, rather than a question and answer catechism like the *Baltimore Catechism* or *Penny Catechism*. Another reason is that people were looking for novelty because that seemed to be the thing to do in the 60’s. Or people had rejected the deposit of faith, formally or informally, and were looking for a new configuration of the Church’s teaching.

The former position is supported in an article on the *New Catechism* by the Archbishop of Atlanta,

From the summaries and reviews I have read, the new Dutch catechism is an answer for the thinking but troubled American Catholic. While many of us have welcomed the new liturgy and ecumenism, the new involvement in social problems, there are also many good Catholics who are deeply disturbed by changes. I do not mean the rebellious traditionalists or those who want to turn

¹⁷³ *A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), v.

¹⁷⁴ Charles Kaiser, *1968 in America, Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture, and the Shaping of a Generation* (New York: Grove Press, 1988), xvi.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

the altar around. I mean the loyal and devoted Catholics who grew up in Catholic homes and a Catholic atmosphere.¹⁷⁶

Sloyan, however, saw nothing novel or radical in the *New Catechism*,

There are in a word, no theological surprises, no concessions in an unusual ecumenical spirit, no tweaking of the nose of the ‘mother and head of all the churches, (to adapt the inscription on the front of S. Giovanni Laterano). The catechism is a closely argued prose work suited to literate middle and upper class adults. It presents traditional positions in a traditional way.¹⁷⁷

The latter position can be supported by the content of the *New Catechism* itself.

“Rome took a dim view of the Dutch effort and pleaded with the bishops to revise the catechism and not publish in other languages until certain changes had been made.”¹⁷⁸

Kevane stated that the catechism “was a subtle deviation from the Ordinary and Universal Magisterium which the Church has been carrying on since the Apostles.”¹⁷⁹

In his review of the text, Gerard Sloyan noted that Bishop Joyce of Burlington, Vermont, where the English edition of the text was being published, refused his imprimatur for a technical reason. (He gave it in the end.) Apparently the other American bishops felt reluctance to support the text, but did not act. Sloyan felt that the contents did not reflect “numerous theological explorations possible since Vatican II.”¹⁸⁰ He added that while this may be true, the text did offer a “humane, reasonable and ‘open’ approach to the ancient faith which they [Catholics] have not been able to

¹⁷⁶Paul J. Hallinan, “A Dutch Treat For Catholic Thinkers” *The Georgia Bulletin*, October 5, 1967. <http://www.georgiabulletin.org/local/1967/10/05/e/?s=A%20New%20>. One month later, Hallinan placed a caveat on these statements in the November 9, 1967 issue of the Bulletin. “Closer study of the book has not changed my mind. But since these comments have been taken by some as an endorsement, I want to qualify a few points. Adult Catholics will understand them, I am sure... “Some teachings are slighted, but never denied; e.g., Mary’s perpetual virginity and indulgences. Conferences are now going on to clarify these passages. Future editions, I am sure, will change any errors or misleading parts. No publications except that of the Scriptures, can claim to teach all we must believe, without error. Even the Bible needs the guidance of the Church as well as careful research in history and language for mature understanding. I am convinced that today’s educated, responsible Catholic reads a book like ‘A New Catechism’ with care. My concern is that many Catholics are not reading today’s books of the Catholic renewal at all. It is in this spirit that I recommend the book. Many who are mature will read it with profit. Many whose faith is wavering will be warmed and cheered by it. And of course, many who are untroubled by any questions will not read it at all.”

<http://www.georgiabulletin.org/local/1967/11/09/f/?s=A%20New%20Catechism>

¹⁷⁷Gerard Sloyan, review of *The New Catechism*, in *Religious Education* 63 (1968): 328.

¹⁷⁸Hardon, 214.

¹⁷⁹Kevane, *Creed and Catechetics*, xlix.

¹⁸⁰Sloyan, review of *A New Catechism*, 328.

detect in pulpit, press, or school.”¹⁸¹ He noted that the chief attribute of the Catechism is its compassion, “...close in spirit to the divine mercy of the words and deed of Jesus.”¹⁸² In closing he uses a phrase from the catechism itself, asserting “faith in Christ is free and cannot be enforced.”¹⁸³ It can be construed from his review that Sloyan is supporting the *New Catechism*’s approach handling of doctrine.

Hardon provided an interesting example of misplaced compassion as he explained the indissolubility of the Sacrament of Matrimony. He referred to a case of conscience noted in the catechism.

It was introduced by a statement, that after a marriage has broken down, ‘many, who are nonetheless conscientious in their general behavior, find this too heavy a burden and enter into a second marriage-outside the Church.’ In this situation the readers are asked whether the persons ‘are necessarily and perpetually to be excluded from the Eucharist’-while living in their second or subsequent-partnership. They are told that this ‘can only be judged by God who knows all things.’ At most, ‘a wise priest will be able to help them to come to a conclusion themselves.’¹⁸⁴

Hardon reported that Rome was not pleased with the final outcome of this proposed case, and told the editors to drop the case entirely from the book. They refused. They reprinted the case, and added quotations from the Vatican along side it. Of course this leaves the true doctrinal solution of the case upon the subjective conscience of the person reading it.¹⁸⁵

However much the Dutch bishops are to blame for the faulty doctrinal content of their catechism, the Vatican was also to blame. Avery Dulles wrote,

The publication of *De Nieuwe Katechismus* by the Dutch bishops in 1966 raised serious questions. Some maintained that the best response to the ambiguities and omissions detected in that volume would be a new catechism for the universal Church, but many believed that the time was not ripe for such a project. The Holy See in 1968 therefore issued only a set of amendments to be incorporated into the Dutch catechism.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 329.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ *A New Catechism*, 320, in Sloyan, review of a *New Catechism*, 330.

¹⁸⁴ Hardon, 276.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Avery Dulles, “The Challenge of the Catechism.” *First Things*, 49 (January 1995): 46-53. (cf. “Declaration by the Commission of Cardinals Concerning the Dutch Catechism” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 60, [1968], 685-91.)

The amendments were merely placed at the end of the book. How many people read appendices? The editor of the text prefaced the supplement, acknowledging the desire of the Commission of Cardinals, "The modifications were then intended to be inserted into the text of the Catechism. But they are now presented separately."¹⁸⁷

Kevane reported that some Catholics in Holland did see a deviation from the Creed in the catechism;¹⁸⁸ they "recognized it perceptively and appealed by letter to Pope Paul VI. With equal perceptiveness the Pope called for a world-wide Year of Faith."¹⁸⁹

Was the former the direct cause of the latter? What caused the Pontiff to call the Year of Faith? Was it the doctrinal and moral confusion that had plagued the Church since the Council?

As will be seen in the following section the Vatican had many other worries in those post-conciliar years. One could imagine Vatican officials wandering the halls of their dicastery and shrugging their shoulders, raising their hands in a gesture of hopelessness saying, "Who knew?" Who knew that there would be such a revolt

¹⁸⁷ Bishops of the Netherlands, *A New Catechism*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 515.

¹⁸⁸ One deviation from the teaching of the Church concerns the Trinity. Because the first of the "deficiencies" concerns the Trinity, it bears study. *A New Catechism* places the discussion of the Trinity at the end of the text, and does not devote a section to the Trinity itself. In the very last section of the text entitled "The Way to the End", it argues that we should not reduce the mystery of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to a formula. This is true, and yet the mystery cannot be discussed without reference to trinity and unity. The New Catechism has a curious explanation as to why we cannot use these terms, since we "shrink from the task" of summing up the Trinity, "because we know that in order to know God, we must not leave the ground where his revelation has brought us-our ordinary life, the world of men. We must not ascend to dizzy heights, because our imagination might at once be captured by some figure as interlocking circles. Or our thoughts might be preoccupied at once by combinations of the numerals one and three, and thus miss the riches of this revelation as given in the Bible. The Bible does not use the word 'three' to speak of this mystery...". The explanation given is anthropocentric; one cannot gain a clearer understanding of the mystery itself (see 498-502). Previously, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* focuses on the Trinity itself. "We should be satisfied with the assurance and certitude which faith gives us that we have been taught these truths by God Himself, to doubt whose word is the extreme of folly and misery. He has said: *Teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)* and again, *there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one (1John 5:7).*"

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* maintains, "The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the 'hierarchy of the truths of faith'. The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men 'and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin.'" (234)

¹⁸⁹ Kevane, *Creed and Catechetics*, 1.

against the deposit of faith after a pastoral council, which wanted, in the absolute core of its being, to lead all Catholics in the pursuit of holiness?

The Attitude of the Catechist

Geraldine Stafford believes that “The real tyranny in the Church during the last thirty years has been the imposition of subjective theological speculation and unauthorized liturgical practices on unsuspecting Catholics.”¹⁹⁰ Stafford’s article was written in response to an article published in *Catechist*¹⁹¹ magazine (March 1997), in which Ed Lewandowski, an official of NCEA’s Dept. of Religious Education, cited a report¹⁹² which stated, “‘The-Church-teaches’ or ‘the-Church-celebrates’ mentality is a form of tyranny which objectifies that which must be evoked from within – the living word of God in the heart.”¹⁹³ This is evocative of Martin Luther’s thought. It is plausible but symptomatic of a problem: catechetical leaders appear to be clinging to a form of catechesis that excluded content, rather than the understanding of and appreciation for doctrine *and* a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as the two-fold aim of catechesis. The use of the word tyranny is also indicative the attitude that the catechetical leadership in the United States had toward the Church.

In June of that year, the Bishops would make known how little doctrine was being taught, and in August, the Congregation for the Clergy would recognize that it was a universal problem. And at the risk of redundancy, the question is asked once more, “How did this happen?”

As evidenced in Chapter I, it cannot be inferred that concern for the deposit of faith is restricted to the period following the Second Vatican Council. In effect, each of the twenty-one Ecumenical Councils of the Church was concerned with the Deposit. Kevane traces this care from the time of Christ to John Paul II’s promulgation of *CT* which was the Church’s most recent catechetical document when the book was published.

¹⁹⁰ Geraldine Stafford, “Why Johnny doesn’t believe II,” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* <http://www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Homiletic/2000-11/stafford.html>, November 2000.

¹⁹¹ Published by Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic, Connecticut.

¹⁹² Murphy Center Report (1976).

¹⁹³ Stafford, “Why Johnny doesn’t believe II,” *ibid*.

From the very beginning described in the New Testament, the Catholic Church has treasured the faith which she teaches as a divine deposit entrusted to her by the Supreme Being of the universe. The very idea of catechesis has always been that of a teaching process which is abidingly faithful to this divine deposit.¹⁹⁴

Kevane synthesized catechetical endeavor, understanding, response of faith, conversion, and included the four pillars of catechesis.

The two fundamental components of both Christian Doctrine and the Christian way of living, namely, of catechesis as a whole, are contained in these two verbs which call to action: the response of the faith which believes the Gospel and the *metanoia* – the repentance, – the conversion - which practices the Gospel in the prayer, the sacramental participation and the Gospel morality of daily Christian living.¹⁹⁵

Kevane included the Holy Thursday letters of John Paul (only two when the text was compiled) to the bishops of the world, and *Inaestimabile Donum*, from the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship. The theme of all three of these documents is love for the Eucharist, which is accomplished both through and from continuous conversion. Of these documents, Kevane noted that people might be confused by their inclusion in a catechetical framework, since they belong more to the area of liturgy.¹⁹⁶ He explains, “The truth is that these documents on *metanoia* are absolutely catechetical, because they contain the reason and the purpose of catechetical teaching, and because they demonstrate in their own way the need of the Church for a catechesis that is faithful to the deposit by, by seeing rigorously to the ‘integrity of the content’ (CT 30).”¹⁹⁷ Alluding to John Paul’s emphasis that catechesis must be liturgical and especially Eucharistic, Kevane explains that, “‘The Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist’ is the heart of the same deposit of faith which is the very content of catechetical teaching.”¹⁹⁸ Indeed, *Lumen Gentium* states that taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice “is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life.”¹⁹⁹ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* expands this by saying “The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’” It continues, “The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are

¹⁹⁴ Kevane, *Creed and Catechetics*, xiv.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, lxxiii.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, lxxi.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.”²⁰⁰

Kevane added *metanoia* and liturgy to a catechetical context. He demonstrates his familiarity with the age-old process of catechesis and the Vatican II’s desire for a life of holiness. This is perhaps the ultimate theme of Vatican II, the universal call to holiness.

The Church, whose mystery is being set forth by this Sacred Synod, is believed to be indefectibly holy. Indeed Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is praised as ‘uniquely holy,’ loved the Church as His bride, delivering Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her. He united her to Himself as His own body and brought it to perfection by the gift of the Holy Spirit for God’s glory. Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification.’²⁰¹

“Accordingly, let all of them see that they direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect love...”²⁰²

Holiness requires *metanoia*, “...a change of mind from unbelief to faith, and a change of heart from sin to the practice of virtue. As conversion, it is fundamental to the teaching of Christ, was the first thing demanded by Peter on Pentecost, and is considered essential to the pursuit of Christian perfection.”²⁰³ “Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart...it entails the desire and resolution to change one’s life, with the hope of God’s mercy and trust in the help of his grace.”²⁰⁴

The following deficiencies would point to a dearth of attention paid to conversion in textbooks.

- Insufficient recognition of the transforming effects of grace
- Deficiency in the teaching of original sin and sin in general

Related to these would be

- Meager exposition on the Christian moral life

¹⁹⁹ LG, 11.

²⁰⁰ CCC, 1324.

²⁰¹ LG, 39.

²⁰² Ibid., 42.

²⁰³ Hardon, 260.

²⁰⁴ CCC, 1431.

- Inadequate presentation of eschatology

On the eve of the Council, John XXIII wrote the encyclical *On the Need for the Practice of Interior and Exterior Penance (Paenitentiam Agere)*.²⁰⁵ In the opening paragraph, he reminded the faithful what he had asked for when he proclaimed the Council, "...that is to make a worthy spiritual preparation for this great event by prayer and other acts of Christian virtue, We included a warning to them not to overlook the practice of voluntary mortification."²⁰⁶ He repeated the request in the encyclical, and added, "Can we wonder, then, that Our predecessors, when they were preparing the ground for an Ecumenical Council, made a point of exhorting the faithful to perform salutary acts of penance?"²⁰⁷ "Our first need is for internal repentance; the detestation, that is, of sin, and the determination to make amends for it. This is the repentance shown by those who make a good Confession, take part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and receive Holy Communion."²⁰⁸ "But the faithful must also be encouraged to do outward acts of penance, both to keep their bodies under the strict control of reason and faith, and to make amends for their own and other people's sins."²⁰⁹ "So much for the subject of Our letter, Venerable Brethren, and it is Our confident hope that both you yourselves and, at your instigation, all Our sons throughout the world, both clerical and lay, will give a whole-hearted and generous response to Our fatherly appeals."²¹⁰ "If such is the case, then the forthcoming Council will indeed be for the faithful, a fruitful source of eternal salvation."²¹¹

Conversion of heart is a crucial point the *GCD* "Faith is a gift of God which calls men to conversion...Catechesis performs the function of disposing men to receive the action of the Holy Spirit and to deepen their conversion. It does this through the Word, to which are joined the witness of life and prayer."²¹² It is crucial to *CT* as well.

²⁰⁵ John XXIII, *Paenitentiam agere, On the Need for the Practice of Interior and Exterior Penance* (hereafter *PA*), 8 (July 1, 1962). In the plethora of books and articles regarding catechetical renewal after the Council, and the contribution of John XXIII in convoking a council, regardless of the praise for John XXIII almost no reference is made to this encyclical, while his social encyclicals, *Pacem in Terris* and *Mater et Magistra*, receive great attention.

²⁰⁶ *PA*, 2.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

²¹² *GCD*, 22.

...the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know His "mystery," the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him.²¹³

In post-conciliar catechetical literature, Kevane's emphasis on *metanoia* and its place in catechetics is unique. Kevane lived this. His academic work in catechesis is valuable. His personal example is as well. The *GCD* stresses "Catechesis, finally, demands the witness of faith, both from the catechists and from the ecclesial community, a witness that is joined to an authentic example of Christian life and to a readiness for sacrifice (cf. LG, 12, 17; NA, 2)."²¹⁴

Kevane and Curran, a Conjunction of Opposites

Eugene Kevane and Charles Curran demonstrate the polarities present in American Catholic academics in regard to assent to the Church's teaching in the post-conciliar Church, both were priests, both were on the faculty of Catholic University of America. The "Curran Affair" is the oft cited title for the pivotal act that gave tacit permission to theologians to dissent: Curran's refusal²¹⁵ to acquiesce to *Humanae Vitae*, promulgated in 1968.²¹⁶ "Since the issuance of *Humanae Vitae* the amount of commentary on the document in all the major languages suggests that more was at stake than contraception, and more people were concerned than Catholics and even Christians."²¹⁷ The members of the Theology Department of the CUA, as well as theologians and bishops across the U.S, disagreed with Paul's decision.²¹⁸

²¹³ CT, 20.

²¹⁴ GCD, 35.

²¹⁵ Curran's own account of the affair, as well as his "theology" of dissent appears in *Dissent In and For the Church: Theologians and Humanae Vitae*, Charles E. Curran, Robert E. Hunt and the "Subject Professors" with John F. Hunt and Terrence R. Connelly (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969).

²¹⁶ 1968 was one of the most violent and divisive years in American history in politics and in religion. "Nineteen sixty-eight was the pivotal year of the sixties: the moment when all of the nation's impulses towards violence, idealism, diversity, and disorder peaked to produce the greatest possible hope – and the worst possible despair" (Kaiser, *1968 in America*, xv). The dissent to *Humanae Vitae* was nestled in between the escalating war in Vietnam and the corresponding violent protests to it, the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, violence and bloodshed from both anti-war and racial riots, tensions which exploded at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

²¹⁷ Hardon 280.

²¹⁸ "It can be foreseen that this teaching will perhaps not be easily received by all: Too numerous are those voices-amplified by the modern means of propaganda-which are contrary to the voice of the Church. To tell the truth, the Church is not surprised to be made, like her divine founder, a

Several of the dissenters were or became prominent in catechetics: Fr. Gerard Sloyan, Br. Gabriel Moran, Berard Marthaler, OFM. Conv., Alfred McBride, O. Praem., Fr. Richard McBrien, and layman William May.²¹⁹ McBride and May would later recant from their position.²²⁰ Similar dissent occurred in Canada and Europe.²²¹

Most Christian churches had discussed the question of artificial contraception for years. John XXIII had formed a Commission on Population and Family Life. Paul VI confirmed its status. After five years work, Paul promulgated *Humanae Vitae*. He had not agreed with the findings of the Commission. “He put his authority on the line – making his decision against the overwhelming majority of his birth control

‘sign of contradiction,’ (22) yet she does not because of this cease to proclaim with humble firmness the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical. Of such laws the Church was not the author, nor consequently can she be their arbiter; she is only their depositary and their interpreter, without ever being able to declare to be licit that which is not so by reason of its intimate and unchangeable opposition to the true good of man.

In defending conjugal morals in their integral wholeness, the Church knows that she contributes towards the establishment of a truly human civilization; she engages man not to abdicate from his own responsibility in order to rely on technical means; by that very fact she defends the dignity of man and wife. Faithful to both the teaching and the example of the Savior, she shows herself to be the sincere and disinterested friend of men, whom she wishes to help, even during their earthly sojourn, ‘to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all men’” (*Humanae Vitae*, 18).

²¹⁹ The entire list of public dissenters from *Humanae Vitae* was published in the National Catholic Reporter, August 14, 1968.

²²⁰ May explained his position, “My name can be found among the signatories, and for signing Curran’s statement of dissent I was congratulated by some for my “courage” and my “intelligence”. I sincerely repent of that act, for it was one of cowardice. It may be of help to some to know why I signed this statement and why I am heartily sorry for having done so. When I signed it, I did not believe that I could, personally, practice contraception. Nor would my wife, who is truly courageous and whose intelligence is enlightened by a deep faith, have ever allowed it... But there was another, baser reason, why I signed the statement. Many of its signers had outstanding reputations as “thinkers” and “scholars” and I wanted to be counted among the elite, the *illuminati*, the bold, courageous, advanced thinkers in Roman Catholicism. I believe that I began to repent of my act almost immediately. Deep down I knew there was something wrong with contraception, and I realized that my decision to sign the statement was, in part at least, motivated by base, vainglorious considerations” (“Message from Our President,” *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter*, Vol 11, No 4 [September 1988]).

²²¹ Rev. Richard McBrien wrote, “Although progressive in theology, social thought, and pastoral outlook, Paul VI’s pontificate was unfortunately overshadowed by his divisive and widely rejected encyclical condemning forms of artificial birth control. So distressed was he by the negative reaction to *Humanae Vitae* (1968) that he vowed never to write another encyclical. And, indeed, Paul VI issued no other during the remaining ten years of his pontificate” (*Lives of the Popes* [San Francisco: Harper, 1997], 367). Later in the book, McBrien includes a very poignant quote from Paul VI, written nine years after his election. “Perhaps the Lord called me to this service not because I have any aptitude for it, or so that I can govern and save the Church in its present difficulties, but so that I can suffer something for the Church so that it will be clear that it is the Lord, and not anyone else, who guides and saves it” (378). McBrien has been accused of plagiarizing this book.

commission.”²²² Bokenkotter opined, “The whole affair precipitated the most serious crisis of papal authority since Luther.”²²³

“Five years was enough to polarize Catholic writers on the subject.”²²⁴ It did not help that the majority and minority opinions of the Commission were released in France and the United States in 1967.²²⁵ One camp insisted “that it was not binding on the Catholic faithful”, because it was not declared as dogma, the other holds “that what Paul expressed was only what the Church always held as irrevocable doctrine on the sanctity of Christian marriage”.²²⁶ Cardinal Ratzinger noted “The Magisterium has drawn attention several times to the serious harm done to the community of the Church by attitudes of general opposition to Church teaching which even come to expression in organized groups.”²²⁷

The American response to *Humanae Vitae* was probably nowhere as violent as at Catholic University. In April, 1966, the Board of Trustees of Catholic University fired Curran over his views on birth control.²²⁸ 7, 000 students and faculty members walked out in his support. Their rallying cry was: “If there is no room for Father Charles Curran in The Catholic University of America, there is no room for the Catholic University in America.” Five days later, the Board reversed their decision, rehired Curran and promoted him.

Curran deviated from both the content of the deposit of faith and fidelity to the Magisterium.²²⁹ Reflecting on his actions immediately upon the promulgation of the encyclical, he stated,

²²² Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 427.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Hardon, 280.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid., 281.

²²⁷ *Donum veritatis*, 32. Ratzinger notes, “In his apostolic exhortation *Paterna Cum Benevolentia*, Paul offered a diagnosis of this problem which is still apropos. In particular, he addresses here that public opposition to the magisterium of the Church also called ‘dissent’, which must be distinguished from the situation of personal difficulties treated above. The phenomenon of dissent can have diverse forms. Its remote and proximate causes are multiple.”

²²⁸ The Board of Trustees voted 28–1 to allow Curran’s contract with the university to expire. Archbishop Paul Hallinan of Atlanta was the only dissenting voice.

²²⁹ Curran was finally silenced by the Vatican in July, 1986, and subsequently fired by Catholic University in January, 1987. He sued Catholic University, the courts upheld the University’s actions.

Our quick, forceful response supported by so many theologians accomplished its purpose. The day after the encyclical was promulgated American Catholics could read in their morning papers about their right to dissent and the fact that Catholics could in theory and practice disagree with the papal teaching and still be loyal Roman Catholics.²³⁰

Ratzinger described such action. "Dissent has different aspects. In its most radical form, it aims at changing the Church following a model of protest which takes its inspiration from political society."²³¹

Kevane refused to support the School of Theology in their allegiance to Curran's position and disaffection for the teachings of Rome on the issues of birth control and sexual morality.²³² The School of Education stood as the sole department at CUA to refuse to strike in protest of Curran's firing. "Academic freedom was now defined as the revolutionaries saw fit. It included the right of people like Father Curran to dissent from the Church's position on sexual ethics, but it did not include any right on Msgr. Kevane's part to dissent from the dissenters."²³³ In the end, Kevane was ousted as Dean of the School of Education, and subsequently left Catholic University in 1968, a shaken man.²³⁴

In 1969, Mother Mary Elise Krantz, SND hired Kevane as the founding director of Notre Dame Pontifical Catechetical Institute. This institute, founded initially for the higher education of religious sisters, received the blessing and personal encouragement of John Cardinal Wright, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the

²³⁰ Charles Curran, *Faithful Dissent* (Kansas City, Miss.: Sheed and Ward, 1986).

²³¹ *Donum veritatis*, 33.

²³² The "academy" was not the only place where pressure to dissent was rife. It also occurred in the clergy. Cardinal Stafford reminisced that a small group of priests met Aug. 4 and tried to persuade 54 fellow priests to publicly dissent from *HV*. "Their objective was to publish the statement the next day in the Baltimore Sun. Stafford was last in line. All before him had signed the letter of dissent. He refused, saying that he had not read the encyclical and that he agreed with the Church's stance on contraception. He encouraged the other priests to at least read *Humanae Vitae* before dissenting. Stafford says that after refusing to publicly dissent from Church teaching, he was isolated and abused by other priests, not only in Baltimore but in subsequent assignments as bishop of Memphis, Tenn., and archbishop of Denver" ("Stafford says priests dissented under pressure," *National Catholic Reporter*, August 13, 1993).

²³³ Michael E. Jones, *John Cardinal Krol and the Cultural Revolution* (South Bend, Ind.: Fidelity Press, 1995), 399.

²³⁴ This was clear from conversations with his colleagues and friends during this time, especially Sr. Mary Elise Krantz, SND, Robert Bradley, SJ and Rev. Frederick Miller, who took care of Msgr. Kevane in his last days. As a student of Msgr. Kevane, I also found these things evident from his demeanor and very rare personal references to the event.

Clergy. Kevane²³⁵ arranged that the Master's Degrees won by the students of Notre Dame Institute were awarded from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome. The students also received a Pontifical Catechetical Diploma.

Msgr. Kevane authored nine books and many journal articles, always demonstrating a love for both the content of the faith and the Magisterium of Church. At a time when polarities in ideologies erupted in the academic and ecclesial arenas concerning both theology and catechesis, Kevane was able to maintain a balanced approach by remaining faithful to the sources of both, in the authentic living out of the Second Vatican Council.

He was a polyglot and an Augustinian scholar. He did not consider himself a specialized theologian, believing that he had training "in theology which is common to all priests but that his "field of study and activity has been catechetical teaching, religious education: the pedagogical principles of formation in the Catholic faith."²³⁶ His constant exhortation to his students at Notre Dame Institute was, "Guard the deposit of faith."

When Kevane retired from Notre Dame Institute, the Most Reverend John R. Keating, Bishop of Arlington wrote,

Monsignor Kevane's contribution to the catechetical field is inestimable... His total commitment to orthodoxy in the Roman Church, one of the greatest of his attributes, will have a stabilizing influence on catechetical teaching for years to come. We thank him for the many well-trained catechists who are at this moment passing on the true faith across this land.²³⁷

Former colleague Rev. Frank McAfee stated that Msgr. Kevane's "greatest impact, however, has been in the war-zone of contemporary catechetics where he has insisted that the teaching of religion not only be orthodox but also appealing and in dialogue with the advance in the communication arts."²³⁸

²³⁵ He also served as a visiting professor of catechetics at the Angelicum and as an adjunct faculty member at the Institute for Advanced Study of Catholic Doctrine, St. John's University, New York and at Holy Apostles Seminary, Cromwell, Connecticut.

²³⁶ Kevane, *Creed and Catechetics*, xvii.

²³⁷ Keating, Most Rev. John. *Arlington Herald*, 1985. In Fitzgerald, Margaret. "Rev. Msgr. Eugene Kevane - In Memoriam". *Hebrew Catholic*, #64, November 1996 -February 1997. 11-15.

Kevane was not the only voice criticizing contemporary catechetics, but he was the most gentle. Jesuit John Hardon, and Msgrs. Michael Wrenn and George Kelley were more acerbic and prolific. Other strident voices included laymen: CUF's James Likoudis, the Wanderer's Frank Morris, and St. Louis University's James Hitchcock. They were passionate about what they perceived to be as the "battle for the American Church" as one of Kelly's books was entitled.²³⁹ They were aggressive in their desire to safeguard the teaching of the Church. Several organizations were founded to provide a venue in which such people could freely express themselves, such as Catholics United for the Faith, the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, the Institute of Religious Life, and the Consortium *Perfectae Caritatis* for women religious. It was not unusual for the same people to speak at each of the annual meetings of these organizations. These men desired to promote assent to the teaching of the Church, especially as articulated by Vatican II. The need to articulate assent was not original to them.

A Grammar of Assent and Catechetics

The name of John Henry Newman (1801-1990) does not occur frequently in the post-conciliar literature. There are many, however, who call Newman the "Father of the Second Vatican Council."²⁴⁰

Newman has been declared "venerable," a step towards canonization. He was made a Cardinal in 1879 at the age of 78. This honor was given to him to recognize his contribution to the thinking of the Church.²⁴¹ He did not write directly about catechesis, though one of the pleasures of his life was catechizing children. And yet his writings offer catechetics some important points to ponder in the authentic delivery of the deposit of faith.

²³⁸ McAfee, Rev. Frank Ibid.

²³⁹ Kelly, George, *Battle for the American Church*, (New York:Image Books, 1981)

²⁴⁰ "As a student of Newman, who is often referred to as the 'father of the Second Vatican Council,' I take comfort from his reflections at the time of the First Vatican Council. There are several points he makes which are I think very relevant to our own post-conciliar situation. First, he warned that patience is called for as time finds remedies for what seem insuperable problems. Second, he pointed out that time is also needed for the implementation of conciliar teaching" (Ian Ker, "What Did the Second Vatican Council Do For Us?," *The Catholic Herald* October 11, 2002).

²⁴¹ As John Paul II did to Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and the American Avery Dulles.

He is one of the most famous converts to Catholicism after St. Paul and St. Augustine. He was born in England when the Church of England was the state church, and had become for many a matter of form rather than a means of salvation. An evangelical revival was underway in the 1830's. C.S. Dessain wrote that the Evangelicals "... concentration on feelings of the heart led to a disparagement of the external and objective in religion, creeds, sacraments and visible Church. A man's feelings were more important than his beliefs."²⁴² This could be said of catechesis after Vatican II.

Newman's first conversion happened at the age of fifteen, "...a great change of thought took place in me. I fell under the influence of a definite Creed, and received into my intellect impressions of dogma, which through God's mercy, have never been effaced or obscured."²⁴³ He followed this search for the clarity of Creed and dogma in his scholarship as an Anglican, and then as a Catholic for the rest of his life.

There should be a response to Creed and dogma. "...a man may say, 'Since this or that doctrine has so much historical evidence in its favor, I must accept it'; he has no real sight or direct perception of it, but he makes up the profession of it, because he feels it would be absurd, under the conditions with which he starts, to do otherwise."²⁴⁴ For Newman, this had not been sufficient: "He does no more than load himself with a form of words instead of contemplating, with the eye of the soul, God himself, the source of all truth, and this doctrine as proceeding from his mouth."²⁴⁵

The first response may be ascribed to those Catholics whose knowledge of the faith comes from what they have memorized from the *Baltimore Catechism*. The second are those who have come to love the teachings of the Church because they have come to know the Author.

Revelation, and its articulation in Magisterial teaching, evokes a response. Newman published *An Essay in Aid of the Grammar of Assent* in 1870, the year that Vatican I ended. He wrote the *Grammar* to clarify what the nature of this response was to be.

²⁴² C. S. Dessain, *John Henry Newman*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), x.

²⁴³ John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 25.

²⁴⁴ Newman, *Sermons Before a Mixed Audience*, Discourse 9: Illuminating Grace, <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/discourses/discourse9.html>, 174-75.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

It is one of his most complex works, and yet there is a simple theme running through it - the Truth requires assent. Ker points out two of the major themes of the *Grammar*, "...the problem of religious certitude and the problem of the mode of cognition characteristic of living faith..."²⁴⁶ He argues that both these themes are reminiscent of the Gospel of John, referring to the difference between "faith" and "sight", which also appears in patristic and medieval theology, "but which was largely lost sight of when (from the seventeenth century almost to our own day) Catholic theology fell victim to an impoverished rationalism."²⁴⁷

Newman's disposition toward faith is as important as his elucidations about it. This has important ramifications for catechesis. Trevor writes,

The conversion at fifteen was so much a new birth that he seemed to himself, even as an old man, a different person before and after it. It was this experience of regeneration that made it easy for him at first to accept the peculiar doctrines of the evangelicals along with those essential to any form of Christianity; yet his conversion was not the personal assurance of salvation, subjective and irreversible, which went by that name among them, but conversion as it is known among Catholics, a special turning to God which determines the course of life to come.²⁴⁸

Referring to his "first" conversion, Trevor posits that man can intellectually grasp what he perceives to be truth, and yet it remains an intellectual exercise. She argues, however, "Natural growth in this fallen world needs the continual power of God to keep it true to the Spirit."²⁴⁹ Trevor believed that this was the key to Newman's journey into the Catholic Church, and his continual search for the will of God, and his continual *metanoia*.

Though his danger was spiritual and intellectual, Newman wrote that God had touched his heart- the traditional centre of being and the seat of love. There was not only a new knowledge of the truth, but a new energy of love...But the emotion of love was not the only form of his response to the divine touch; from the first moment his will was moved to obey the will of God. As his mind was directed to the system of Christian truth, and his love to the supreme lover, so his will was set on spiritual action. What is light to the mind, is love to the heart, and in action is life...This three-fold response meant that every force of his being centered on God – in the Trinity, through Christ.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 10.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Meriol Trevor, *Newman: The Pillar of the Cloud* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962), 21.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

The Grammar of Assent was written, in a way, like many of the writings of the great thinkers and saints of the Church. Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus; Augustine to Deogratias; Irenaeus to Marcianus; Newman to William Froude. In his introduction to the *Grammar*, Ker wrote, “Not the least of the advantages of taking the route into the *Grammar* is that we are thereby reminded that even this most theoretical and technical of Newman’s works, was provoked and stimulated by personal considerations; by his love for a lifelong friend the fundamental currents of whose thinking had drifted from his own.”²⁵¹ The purpose of using the *Grammar* here is not to engage in a technical analysis of his theological and philosophical findings concerning his assent, but his attitude toward it, which serves as a valuable tool in discerning the correlation between dissent and the timbre of catechetical renewal which led to the deficiencies.

In the beginning of the *Grammar*, Newman makes the distinction between real and notional assent. Real assents are necessary. “Till we have them, in spite of full apprehension and assent in the field of notions, we have no intellectual moorings, and are at the mercy of impulses, fancies, and wandering lights, whether as regards to personal conduct, social and political action, or religion.”²⁵² Earlier, Newman had noted that just as there were three ways of enunciating propositions: question, conclusion, and assertion, there were three ways of holding propositions: doubt, inference, and assent.²⁵³ It is assent to revealed religion that is the focus of this treatment of the *Grammar*. In making the case that the three modes of holding propositions are distinct from one another, he wrote

For instance, in the case of Revealed Religion, according as one or other of these is paramount within him, a man is a skeptic as regards it; or a philosopher, thinking it more or less probable considered as a conclusion of reason; or he has an understanding faith in it, and is recognized as a believer. If he simply disbelieves, or dissents, then he is assenting to the contradictory of the thesis, viz. to the proposition that there is no Revelation.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 21-22.

²⁵¹ Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 3.

²⁵² Ibid., 65.

²⁵³ Ibid., 26.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 27. This passage will later serve as a segue between the earlier discussion of revelation, and the application of revelation to catechesis by certain theologians after the Council, who do indeed propose that there is no revelation.

There are two kinds of assent – real and notional. “Real assents affect the whole of man’s existence: ...and are responsible for the particular and personal direction he imparts to his life, the values he strives to attain, and the efforts he will make to attain them.”²⁵⁵

He then contrasts inference and assent, “Assent is unconditional; else, it is not really represented by assertion. Inference is conditional, because a conclusion at least implies the assumption of premises, and still more, because in concrete matter, on which I am engaged, demonstration is impossible.”²⁵⁶ He also makes the distinction as regards their apprehension. “We cannot assent to a proposition, without some intelligent apprehension of it; whereas we need not understand it all in order to infer it.”²⁵⁷

There are two kinds of apprehension, notional and real. They can both be present, as when one responds to a general truth and then to something specific presented at the same time. “Not that real apprehension, as such, impels to action, any more than the notional; but it excites and stimulates the affections and the passions, by bringing facts home to them as motive causes. Thus it indirectly brings about what the apprehension of large principles, of general laws, or moral obligations could never effect.”²⁵⁸ “To apprehend notionally is to have breadth of mind, but to be shallow; to apprehend really is to be deep, but to be narrow-minded.”²⁵⁹ It could appear that is better to be broad-minded, rather than narrow-minded. “Liberals” are thought of as being broadminded, and conservatives as being narrow-minded. Newman clarifies the distinctions he has made. He does not reject the apprehension of notions, otherwise “we should forever pace round one small circle of knowledge”. “However, real apprehension has the precedence, as being the scope and end and the test of notional; and the fuller is the mind’s hold upon things or what it considers such, the more fertile is it in its aspects of them, and the more practical in its definitions.”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁵ Philip Jones, C.Ss.R., *The Purpose and Method of John Henry Newman’s Grammar of Assent* (Rome: Pontificum Athenaeum Anselmianum, 1985), 4.

²⁵⁶ Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 27.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 28.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 31.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 47.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

Real apprehension is concerned with objects, not notions, therefore real apprehension, according to Newman, is stronger than notional. “Experiences and their images strike and occupy the mind, as abstractions and their combinations do not.”²⁶¹ Real assents then are directed to objects. “In its notional assents as well as in its inferences, the mind contemplates its own creations instead of things; in real it is directed toward things, represented by impressions which they have left on the imagination.” Real assent is necessary when dealing with religion.

Newman devotes Chapter 4 of the *Grammar* to apprehension and assent in the matter of religion. He begins by stating that,

A dogma is a proposition; it stands for a notion or for a thing; and to believe it is to give the assent of the mind to it, as it stands for the one or for the other. To give real assent to it is an act of religion; to give a notional, is a theological act. It is discerned, rested in, and appropriated as a reality, by the religious imagination; it is held as a truth, by the theological intellect.²⁶²

He holds that the Trinity can be understood and held with real assent as it is professed in the Athanasian Creed, but “he claims that we cannot really assent to the doctrine as a whole. We can only really assent to the individual propositions taken one by one, which together make up the doctrine of the Trinity.”²⁶³ The terms by which we define the Trinity are words that everyone knows, and yet they are inadequate because they refer to God. He also notes this with the use of the word “personal” when applying it to God, as well as three, one, he, God, Father, Son, Spirit. We can understand these words singularly, as we know them in daily life, but not comprehend them as they fit together to define the mystery of the Trinity.

We cannot, because the mystery transcends all our experience; we have no experiences in our memory which we can put together, compare, contrast, unite, and thereby transmute into an image of the Ineffable Verity; -certainly; but what *is* in some degree a matter of experience, what *is* presented for the imagination, the affections, the devotion, the spiritual life of the Christian to repose upon with a real assent, what stands for things, not for notions only, is each of those propositions taken one by one, and that, not in the case of intellectual and thoughtful minds only, but all religious minds whatever, in the case of a child or a peasant, as well as of a philosopher.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Ibid., 50.

²⁶² Ibid., 93.

²⁶³ Jones, *The Purpose and Method of John Henry Newman's Grammar of Assent*, 33.

²⁶⁴ Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 115-116.

There are those who hold that the tenets of doctrine are incomprehensible to believers. In the 60's and 70's, many practiced religious education that rests entirely on experience. They fail to provide the answer to the question, "the experience of what?" While they would not overtly deny the Creed, they would not teach it to their students, assuming that they could not grasp its articles because they could not experience them. Experience is important, but as was the case with reason, it cannot arrive at the sublimity of the truth that our reason or experience can tell us exists.

Newman makes another point with regard to the Trinity, known in its parts. "Moreover, our devotion is tried and confused by the long list of propositions which theology is obliged to draw up, by the limitations, explanations, definitions, adjustments, balancings, cautions, arbitrary, prohibitions, which are imperatively required by the weakness of human thought and the imperfections of human languages."²⁶⁵

In Newman's discussion of belief in the Trinity, one could intuit that he desired more than a rational approach to the dogmas of the faith. "Such exercises of reasoning indeed do but increase and harmonize our notional apprehension of the dogma, but they add little to the luminous and vital force with which its separate propositions come home to our imagination, as if they are necessary, as they certainly are, they are necessary not so much for faith, as against unbelief."²⁶⁶ This vital force was demonstrated in the willingness of believers to go to their death for what they believe.

Newman makes the point that because the Church is the "pillar and ground of the Truth [1Tim. 3:14]", she is bound to denounce opinions at variance with the truth, even when that position is taught by someone in authority to teach. In a sentence reminiscent of Vincent of Lerins, he states, "It is plain, there cannot be two rules of faith in the same communion..."²⁶⁷ In the end, Newman rests in the dogma of infallibility, "and the consequent duty of 'implicit faith' in her word."²⁶⁸

The 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church' is an article of the Creed, and an article, which inclusive of her infallibility, all men, high and low, can easily

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 116.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 129.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

master and accept with a real and operative assent. It stands in the place of abstruse propositions in a Catholic's mind, for to believe in her word is virtually believe in them all. Even what he cannot understand, at least he can believe to be true; and he believes it to be true because he believes in the Church.²⁶⁹

Newman holds that a person may not understand all the points at once, but learns one article at a time. "Thus his belief in the *depositum* of revelation is a belief in all the doctrines in the *depositum*. He may only know some of these doctrines, but he has the intention of believing in them all as soon as he has understood them."²⁷⁰

He explains the differences between simple and complex assent, as well as certitude and the confidence that comes from it. "Without certitude in religious faith there may be much decency of profession and of observance but there can be no habit of prayer, no directness of devotion, no intercourse with the unseen, no generosity and self-sacrifice."²⁷¹

And he asserts that certitude "is a deliberate assent given after reasoning."²⁷² "Errors in reasoning are lessons and warnings, not to give up reasoning, but to reason with greater caution."²⁷³ Newman discusses man's growth in knowledge, "...the intellect admits of an education; man is a being in progress; he has to learn how to fulfil his end, and to be what facts show he is intended to be...his faculties...are gradually carried on by practice and experience to their perfection."²⁷⁴

This then would be the place of catechesis, the deliberate attempt to educate in the faith, so that a person could come to the fullness of the truth. Newman's attitude toward the Church and her teaching demonstrated in the *Grammar* stand in direct opposition to many theologians who had a direct effect on catechesis, including the errors in the Dutch Catechism and the formal dissent of Charles Curran and his colleagues.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Jones, *The Purpose and Method of John Henry Newman's Grammar of Assent*, 38.

²⁷¹ Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 180.

²⁷² Ibid., 186.

²⁷³ Ibid., 187.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 189.

Theology and Catechesis

What is the relationship between the theologian and revealed truth? In *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul wrote,

Theology is structured as an understanding of faith in the light of a twofold methodological principle: the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei*. With the first, theology makes its own the content of Revelation as this has been gradually expounded in Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Church's living Magisterium. With the second, theology seeks to respond through speculative enquiry to the specific demands of disciplined thought.²⁷⁵

Therefore,

With regard to the *intellectus fidei*, a prime consideration must be that divine Truth "proposed to us in the Sacred Scriptures and rightly interpreted by the Church's teaching" enjoys an innate intelligibility, so logically consistent that it stands as an authentic body of knowledge. The *intellectus fidei* expounds this truth, not only in grasping the logical and conceptual structure of the propositions in which the Church's teaching is framed, but also, indeed primarily, in bringing to light the salvific meaning of these propositions for the individual and for humanity. From the sum of these propositions, the believer comes to know the history of salvation, which culminates in the person of Jesus Christ and in his Paschal Mystery. Believers then share in this mystery by their assent of faith.

In *CT*, he noted the direct relationship between catechesis and theology.

Obviously this connection is profound and vital for those who understand the irreplaceable mission of theology in the service of Faith. Thus it is no surprise that every stirring in the field of theology also has repercussions in that of catechesis. In this period immediately after the Council, the Church is living through an important but hazardous time of theological research. The same must be said of hermeneutics with respect to exegesis.²⁷⁶

Hastings wrote, "While the papacy of Pope Paul had remained uncomfortably unidentified with either 'progressive' or 'conservative', that of John Paul became increasingly closely tied to the latter, and at times in a state of not much less than guerilla war with the 'magisterium' of the Church's principal theologians: a truly strange position for a pope to be in."²⁷⁷ Hastings continued,

²⁷⁵ *Fides et Ratio*, 65.

²⁷⁶ *CT*, 61.

²⁷⁷ Adrian Hastings, "Catholic History from Vatican I to John Paul II," in *Modern Catholicism Vatican II and after*, ed. idem (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 9.

While *Humanae Vitae* began the detachment of large segments of the Catholic community, particularly more vocal segments, from the near unanimous and unquestioned following of papal authority characteristic of the pre-Vatican II era, it was left to John Paul and Cardinal Ratzinger...to harden that detachment into a consistent attitude of distrust as the Pope seemed to distance himself more and more from many of the central values of the Council, and of the most apparently positive and welcomed developments of Catholicism in the subsequent years. Collegiality seemed now once more a forgotten word.²⁷⁸

In 1990, the CDF, headed by Ratzinger, produced *The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*. In the introductory paragraphs, he noted:

Theology has importance for the Church in every age so that it can respond to the plan of God "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). In times of great spiritual and cultural change, theology is all the more important. Yet it also is exposed to risks since it must strive to "abide" in the truth (cf. Jn 8:31), while at the same time taking into account the new problems which confront the human spirit. In our century, in particular, during the periods of preparation for and implementation of the Second Vatican Council, theology contributed much to a deeper "understanding of the realities and the words handed on"(DV 8).²⁷⁹

He added, "But it also experienced and continues to experience moments of crisis and tension."²⁸⁰ In 1998, John Paul again addressed the issue.

Theological work in the Church is first of all at the service of the proclamation of the faith and of catechesis. Proclamation or kerygma is a call to conversion, announcing the truth of Christ, which reaches its summit in his Paschal Mystery: for only in Christ is it possible to know the fullness of the truth which saves (cf. *Acts* 4:12; 1 *Tm* 2:4-6).²⁸¹

Ratzinger described the work of the theologian. "His role is to pursue in a particular way an ever deeper understanding of the Word of God found in the inspired Scriptures and handed on by the living Tradition of the Church. He does this in communion with the magisterium which has been charged with the responsibility of preserving the deposit of faith."²⁸² In the mind of the Church, the Catholic theologian works within her.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ *Donum veritatis*, 1.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ *Fides et Ratio*, 99.

²⁸² *Donum veritatis*, 6.

Paul understood. “For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me” (2 Tim. 1:11). And we also see the Paul’s confidence in instructing Timothy to do as he has done, “Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus...” (2 Tim. 1:11-13)

In the early Church there was no separation between theologian and catechist. The Fathers of the Church combined theological erudition and a pastoral desire to hand on the faith in order to draw people to Christ. Irenaeus has been called the “Founder of Catholic Theology.”²⁸³ His writings contain the first real theological treatment of the deposit of faith within a pastoral context. The *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* is a letter to Marcianus. He wrote to “set forth in brief the preaching of the truth, to confirm your faith.”²⁸⁴ He asserts “... we must keep strictly, without deviation, the rule of faith, and carry out the commands of God, believing in God, and fearing Him, because He is Lord, and loving Him because He is Father.

Irenaeus was a

...man of tradition, *paradosis*. To him, however, what was handed down was not a collection of formal beliefs, but a means of living contact with the sources of life, indeed with the Life himself. He felt to the full what a modern writer has called ‘the thrill of tradition’ [Moffatt, *The Thrill of Tradition*, MacMillan, New York, 1944, p.71]. His highest aim was to state clearly what the Church believed and taught, and to preserve the teaching from corruption.²⁸⁵

The essence of the Fathers’ contribution to the Church was a personal rather than purely academic relationship with Christ; the conviction that he was “handing on” what he received; and a desire to “guard the deposit.” Hardy states that Irenaeus “did not aim at originality, but this did not prevent him from achieving it.”²⁸⁶ Hardy adds

²⁸³ Benedict XVI, Homily on the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29, 2005. He is often referred to as the Father of Theology as well.

²⁸⁴ Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 1; trans. Joseph P. Smith, S.J., *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York: Newman Press, 1952).

²⁸⁵ *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril C. Richardson et al. (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1970), 350; citing Moffat, *The Thrill of Tradition* (New York: MacMillan, 1944), 71.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

“Irenaeus sticks to the simplicity of the faith, but gives it some of the thrill that enables one to describe the Creed as an epic and the dogma as the drama.”²⁸⁷

St. Augustine was another theologian/catechist. Many consider him to be the Father of Catechesis. He is a Doctor of the Church and is called the “Father of Christian Philosophy”. He is quoted more than any theologian in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. John Paul II wrote,

I too have added my voice to those of my predecessors, when I expressed my strong desire ‘that his philosophical, theological and spiritual doctrine be studied and spread, so that he may continue . . . his teaching in the Church, a humble but at the same time enlightened teaching which speaks above all of Christ and love.’²⁸⁸ [ellipsis his]

Augustine’s love is apparent in *De Catechizandis Rudibus*. He tells Deogratias that he must respond. “I feel constrained not only by that love and service which is due from me to you on the terms of familiar friendship, but also by that which I owe universally to my mother the Church, by no means to refuse the task, but rather to take it up with a prompt and devoted willingness.”²⁸⁹ He describes his duty to help Deogratias and other catechists, “to do all that lies in my power to the end that they may be able to accomplish easily and expeditiously what they sedulously and earnestly aim at.”²⁹⁰

John Paul’s “fervent desire” was “that his teaching should be studied and widely known, and his pastoral zeal be imitated, so that the authoritative teaching of such a great doctor and pastor may flourish ever more happily in the Church and in the world, for the progress of the faith and of culture.”²⁹¹ The Pope notes the “...immense patrimony of his thought, which is as a whole valid even now”, and adds “above all, his legacy is the theological method to which he remained absolutely faithful. We know that this method implied full adherence to the authority of the faith,

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 351.

²⁸⁸ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Augustinum Hipponensem* (August 16, 1986), Opening Paragraph.

²⁸⁹ Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* 2.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 3.

²⁹¹ John Paul II, *Augustinum Hipponensem*, 5.

which is one in its origin--the authority of Christ--and is revealed through Scripture, Tradition and the Church.”²⁹²

The Church understands truth in relation to Christ. “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Jesus is the truth that liberates those who wish to follow him. “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-31). At the Last Supper he prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth” (John 17:17-19).

This is important for theology and catechesis. “Both activities are at the service of faith and truth.”²⁹³

Ratzinger noted that “Theological science responds to the invitation of truth as it seeks to understand the faith.”²⁹⁴

The theologian’s work thus responds to a dynamism found in the faith itself. Truth, by its nature, seeks to be communicated since man was created for the perception of truth and from the depths of his being desires knowledge of it so that he can discover himself in the truth and find there his salvation (1 Tim. 2:4). For this reason, the Lord sent forth His Apostles to make ‘disciples’ of all nations and teach them (Mt. 28:19). Theology, which seeks the “reasons of faith” and offers these reasons as a response to those seeking them, thus constitutes an integral part of obedience to the command of Christ, for men cannot become disciples if the truth found in the word of faith is not presented to them (cf. Rom 10:14f. Theology therefore offers its contribution so that the faith might be communicated.²⁹⁵

In the next paragraph Ratzinger’s reiterates the relationship between revelation and response of faith.

Appealing to the understanding of those who do not yet know Christ, it helps them to seek and find faith. Obedient to the impulse of truth which seeks to be communicated, theology also arises from love and love’s dynamism. In the act of faith, man knows God’s goodness and begins to love him. Love, however, is ever desirous of a better knowledge of the beloved. From this double origin of theology, inscribed upon the interior life of the people of God

²⁹² Ibid., 4.

²⁹³ Francis Kelly, *The Mystery We Proclaim*, 2nd ed. (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1999), 120.

²⁹⁴ *Donum veritatis*, 6.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 7.

and its missionary vocation, derived the method with which it ought to be pursued in order to satisfy the requirements of its nature.²⁹⁶

He foreshadows the same emphasis in the GDC's articulation of catechetical methodology, echoing the *Roman Catechism* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "All doctrine is directed to the love that never ends."²⁹⁷

His thinking had not changed when as Pope Benedict XVI, he addressed the International Theological Commission. He made several points: theology is always exercised in the Church and for the Church, with the living Magisterium of the Church and under her authority; it requires scientific competence but the spirit of faith and humility; it is only with prayer and contemplation that it is possible to be docile to the Holy Spirit that will make theological research fruitful for the good of the Church and humanity; finally that rationality, a scientific approach and thinking in communion with the Church are not exclusive of each other but go together – the Holy Spirit guides the Church to all truth, the Church is at the service of the truth and her guidance is an education in truth.²⁹⁸

He asserted that "The revelation of Christ is consequently the fundamental normative starting point for theology."²⁹⁹ Some theologians redefined revelation in order to legitimize a theological perspective that does not correspond to the teaching of Church. "Recent times have seen the rise to prominence of various doctrines which tend to devalue even the truths which had been judged certain. A legitimate plurality of positions has yielded to an undifferentiated pluralism, based upon the assumption that all positions are equally valid, which is one of today's most widespread symptoms of the lack of confidence in truth."³⁰⁰ Matthew Lamb inquired,

To what extent, for example, have we been responsible for students losing or weakening their Catholic faith and moral, virtuous practice? Our society does not force one to belong to a particular religion. When theologians claim to be Catholic, while dissenting from important Church teachings, they are living a lie. They hold theological positions that might be espoused in another

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ CCC, 25.

²⁹⁸ Address of Benedict XVI to the International Theological Commission, December 19, 2005. www.zenit.org.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ *Fides et Ratio*, 5.

Christian denomination, but instead of honestly joining that denomination, they claim they are still Catholic.³⁰¹

In 1977 Matthew Hayes asked, “How much theology should coordinators and DRE’s know?” He proposes: a) scripture because it is the touchstone of the Christian experience of God, b) with the major creedal and conciliar statements of the Catholic/Christian community because we do encounter God within this community, c) with historical and current developments in moral theology to assist people in being clear about directions in living, d) historical and current developments in sacramental theology because these rites of the church build upon the happenings in human life that touch us most deeply, e) historical and current developments in ecclesiology to help others deal with the major modern problem of alienation and aloneness. Hayes notes that the job of the DRE is not that of the theologian. “In the broader sense, however, the DRE has to be very much an expert in theology because it is one of his/her major tasks to be a catalyst for individuals and the communities to theologize about their experiences with the divine.”³⁰²

Within a few paragraphs, Hayes articulated the situation in catechesis at the time - experience was paramount and catechesis was anthropocentric. Theology was not understood in the context of revelation, Christocentrism, or truth.

In 1998, John Paul felt that it was “absolutely necessary” to insert certain norms into the 1983 Code of Canon Law. “To protect the faith of the Catholic Church against errors arising from certain members of the Christian faithful, especially from among those dedicated to the various disciplines of sacred theology...”³⁰³ The new norms, “...expressly impose the obligation of upholding truths proposed in a definitive way by the Magisterium of the Church...”³⁰⁴ John Paul referenced the canonical lacunae found in the *Profession of faith* developed by the CDF³⁰⁵. To the original Canon 750, and new paragraph was added.

³⁰¹ Matthew Lamb, “Theological Malpractice, The Roots of Scandal,” *National Review* October 3, 2002.

³⁰² Matthew J. Hayes, “How Much Theology Should Coordinators and DRE’s Know?” *The Living Light* 14 (1977): 365.

³⁰³ *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, Introductory paragraph.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity,” *AAS* 81 (1989), 105.

Can. 750 §1. A person must believe with divine and Catholic faith all those things contained in the word of God, written or handed on, that is, in the one deposit of faith entrusted to the Church, and at the same time proposed as divinely revealed either by the solemn magisterium of the Church or by its ordinary and universal magisterium which is manifested by the common adherence of the Christian faithful under the leadership of the sacred magisterium; therefore all are bound to avoid any doctrines whatsoever contrary to them.

§2. Each and every thing which is proposed definitively by the magisterium of the Church concerning the doctrine of faith and morals, that is, each and every thing which is required to safeguard reverently and to expound faithfully the same deposit of faith, is also to be firmly embraced and retained; therefore, one who rejects those propositions which are to be held definitively is opposed to the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

The Profession of Faith was mandated in Canon 833. Those required to make the profession include "...in the presence of the rector if he is a priest or in the presence of the local ordinary or their delegates, teachers in any universities whatsoever who teach disciplines pertaining to faith or morals, when they begin their function..."³⁰⁶

The CDF states,

Collaboration between the theologian and the Magisterium occurs in a special way when the theologian receives the canonical mission or the mandate to teach. In a certain sense, such collaboration becomes a participation in the work of the Magisterium linked, as it then is, by a juridic bond. The theologian's code of conduct, which obviously has its origin in the service of the Word of God, is here reinforced by the commitment the theologian assumes in accepting his office, making the profession of faith, and taking the oath of fidelity.³⁰⁷

Forty years after the Council, Richard Gaillardetz³⁰⁸ is representative of those theologians who far from submitting their work to the authority of the Magisterium, redefine the Magisterium, and the assent that is proper to its teaching. He is a popular speaker and contributor to catechetics in the United States, often given an audience by the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership. He has very loosely interpreted the teaching of Vatican II in regards to the relationship between theologians and the Magisterium, as well the content of *Ecclesial Vocation* from the CDF. He believes

³⁰⁶ Canon 833§7.

³⁰⁷ *Donum veritatis*, 22.

³⁰⁸ Gaillardetz serves as the Margaret and Thomas Murray and James J. Bacik Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Toledo, Ohio.

the Council's desire for collaboration of theologians with the Magisterium connotes equality between them.

He does so by undermining the authority of the Pope. "The pope is neither head of the whole church, nor bishop of the whole Church. It is Christ and not the bishop of Rome who is head of the Church."³⁰⁹ True, in its essence. However *Lumen Gentium* "teaches and declares that Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established His holy Church, having sent forth the apostles as He Himself had been sent by the Father; and He willed that their successors, namely the bishops, should be shepherds in His Church even to the consummation of the world."³¹⁰

The Council notes that, "...He placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion."³¹¹ Gaillardetz states, "The pope is pope only because he is the first bishop of the local church of Rome, a church which from ancient times was granted a distinctive primacy among all the other churches."³¹² Vatican I had declared, "So we teach and declare that according to the testimonies of the Gospel the primacy of jurisdiction over the entire Church of God was promised and was conferred immediately and directly upon the blessed Apostle Peter by Christ the Lord."³¹³ He is ignoring Scriptural and Conciliar and Magisterial teaching of the primacy of Peter.

Even if the doctrine of the faith is not in question, the theologian will not present his own opinions or divergent hypotheses as though they were non-arguable conclusions. Respect for the truth as well as for the People of God requires this discretion (cf. Rom 14:1-15; 1 Cor 8; 10:23-33). For the same reasons, the theologian will refrain from giving untimely public expression to them.³¹⁴

Thus done, he can now reconstruct according to his own theories, consistently referring to Vatican II, but making little direct reference to its documents. He also dissects the kinds of assent defined by the Church.

³⁰⁹ Richard Gaillardetz, *By What Authority? A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003), 69.

³¹⁰ *LG*, 18.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?*, 69.

³¹³ *Pastor Aeternus*, Denzinger, 1822.

Conclusion

In Chapter II, the nature of revelation and the response of faith as articulated by the Church have been looked at in reference to its application in theology and catechetics. Since Vatican II, which elaborated the teaching of Vatican I, many theologians and catechists deviated from that teaching, to the point of dissent. At this juncture, it can be proposed that the deficiencies found in religious education textbooks are the result of dissent among theologians and catechists. It has not always been formal dissent *per se*.

The Curran case has been the most famous, because it was first and because of the civil litigation that followed, all of which was covered hungrily by the media. Therefore, the case has continued to be the benchmark for the question of the theologian's capacity to assent or dissent from magisterial teaching. The Church has been prolific in her response to the positions taken by these theologians. However, her positions are not made merely in reaction to challenges. Instead, "there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (see Luke 2:19, 51) through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth."³¹⁵

Revelation, the deposit of faith, and the response of faith remain the key elements in catechesis as described in the post-Conciliar catechetical documents. In Chapters III and IV specific instances will be given as to when these elements have been heeded or ignored.

³¹⁴ *Donum veritatis*, 27.

³¹⁵ *DV*, 8.

Chapter III

Content of Catechesis: the Deposit of Faith

Introduction

Chapter III seeks to gain an understanding of the treatment of the deposit of faith by those engaged in catechetics in light of the insights gained by the Council, and applied in the post-Conciliar catechetical documents. The *General Directory for Catechesis* expressed a similar desire, "Firstly, it is necessary to see how the Second Vatican Council has been accepted in the Church, and how it has borne fruit. The great conciliar documents have not remained a dead letter: their effects are widely acknowledged."¹

There were many theological influences on catechetical renewal after the Council. Three theologians in particular have had a direct impact on catechesis in the United States: Austrian Jesuits Josef Jungmann and Johannes Hofinger and Christian Brother Gabriel Moran. Jungmann worked before the Council, Hofinger's work was bridged by the Council, and Moran's work began during the Council and, at this writing, continues. Their specific concerns were revelation and the application of doctrine. Jungmann and Hofinger often presage the post-conciliar catechetical documents. After the Council, Hofinger moved from Christocentric to anthropocentric catechesis. Moran challenged their kerygmatic approach to catechesis by redefining revelation and catechesis.

The *General Directory for Catechesis* and the Content of Catechetics

The GDC listed the positive points since the Council: the great number of individuals who enthusiastically devote themselves to catechesis; the missionary character of contemporary catechesis and its ability to secure adherence to the faith on the part of catechumens and those to be catechized; there is an acute awareness that catechesis must have a catechumenal style, as of integral formation rather than mere information; catechesis as a means of arousing true conversion; the expanding role of adult catechesis. Because of recent Magisterial endeavors catechetical thought has gained much in our times in terms of quality and profundity. In this

¹ GDC, 27.

sense many local Churches already have at their disposal suitable and opportune pastoral programs.²

However, "...in the midst of this richness there also occur 'difficulties about the acceptance of the Council.'"³ Despite its highly developed ecclesiology, "...the sense of belonging to the Church has weakened and a certain disaffection towards the Church is frequently noted"⁴. This was often demonstrated by those who were engaged in administration, catechist training, and textbook publication.

GDC states that, "with regard to the fundamental direction of catechesis, catechetical activity is still usually impregnated with the idea of 'Revelation'"⁵. It continues, "however, the conciliar concept of 'Tradition' is much less influential as an inspiration for catechesis: in much catechesis, indeed, reference to Sacred Scripture is virtually exclusive and unaccompanied by sufficient reference to the Church's long experience and reflection, acquired in the course of her two-thousand-year history."⁶ *Dei Verbum* stated, "This sacred tradition, therefore, and Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God, from whom she has received everything, until she is brought finally to see Him as He is, face to face (see 1 John 3:2)."⁷

The Tradition "difficulty" created another. "The ecclesial nature of catechesis, in this case, appears less clearly; the inter-relation of Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium; each according to 'its proper mode' does not yet harmoniously enrich a catechetical transmission of the faith."⁸ The integral cohesion of these three vital elements was confirmed at Trent, Vatican I, and especially Vatican II. Their source is ultimately Jesus Christ, the fullness of revelation, and head of his Body, the Church. Misunderstanding leads directly to another difficulty listed in the GDC.

Concerning the object of catechesis, which always seeks to promote communion with Jesus Christ, it is necessary to arrive at a more balanced presentation of the entire truth of the mystery of Christ. Often, emphasis is given only to his humanity without any explicit reference to his divinity; at other times, less frequently today, emphasis is

² Ibid., 29.

³ Ibid., 28.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ LG, 7.

⁸ GDC 30.

so exclusively placed on his divinity that the reality of the mystery of the Incarnate Word is no longer evident.⁹

Newman, as has been seen, believed that real apprehension could only be applied to objects. John Paul wrote, “The primary and essential object of catechesis is, to use an expression dear to St. Paul and also to contemporary theology, ‘the mystery of Christ.’”¹⁰ “The opening made by the Second Vatican Council enabled the Church and Christians to reach a more complete awareness of the mystery of Christ...”¹¹

If the mystery of Christ is not comprehended the mystery of the Church will not be comprehended. “The mystery of the holy Church is manifest in its very foundation. The Lord Jesus set it on its course by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the Kingdom of God, which, for centuries, had been promised in the Scriptures: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand’” (Mk 1:15).¹²

The GDC posits that

Such ideologies and conduct have led to divisions which damage that witness of communion indispensable to evangelization. The evangelizing activity of the Church, catechesis included, must tend all the more decisively toward solid ecclesial cohesion. To this end it is urgent that an authentic ecclesiology of communion be promoted and deepened in order to arouse in Christians a deep ecclesial spirituality.¹³

The Eucharist is the source of Communion. “Strengthened in Holy Communion by the Body of Christ, they then manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most august sacrament.”¹⁴ Ratzinger wrote that the Temple was the center and guarantee of the unity of the Jews, and the common celebration of the Passover enacted that unity. In the new dispensation “the body of the Lord, which is the center of the Lord’s Supper, is the one new temple that joins Christians together into a much more real unity...”¹⁵

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ CT, 5.

¹¹ *Redemptoris Hominis*, 11.

¹² LG, 5.

¹³ GDC, 28.

¹⁴ LG, 11.

¹⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Church as Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 27, quoting himself, *Das Neue Volk Gottes* (Dusseldorf, 1969), 79.

The Council taught that the communion of the Church is first found in the Trinity, entered into through baptism and is sustained in the Eucharist and the other sacraments.¹⁶ Because the Trinity is one and three, man images God individually and communally. “And in order that the episcopate itself might be one and undivided, He placed Blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and communion.”¹⁷

Ratzinger identified two key elements for an understanding of the Church. The first is the dynamism of unification, “in which men draw together by moving toward God...” Second, “the point of this convergence of this new people is Christ.”¹⁸ In order to gain a true understanding of what this entails, “...those who belong to this people must first lay down their grown-up autonomy and acknowledge themselves as children before God (cf. Mk 10:24; Mt 11:25).”¹⁹

In 1982, the CDF issued, “Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion.” The concept of communion lies “at the heart of the Church’s self-understanding,” insofar as it is the mystery of the personal union of each human being with the divine Trinity and with the rest of mankind, initiated with the faith, and, having begun as a reality in the Church on earth, is directed towards its eschatological fulfillment in the heavenly Church.²⁰

This prioritization of the social community will lead to serious difficulties in the understanding of revelation, as will be seen in the analysis of Gabriel Moran’s work. Luther’s idea of the Church was the “community model.” “For Luther, the Church was neither the sacred organization nor the historical hierarchical authority, but the fellowship of true believers in Christ.”²¹ The visible Church “was declared to be not a divinely founded institution but simply a number of communities whose origin was human and historical.”²²

Other difficulties cited by the GDC included “a weak and fragmentary” link to the liturgy; a dualism between content and method, “after a period in which excessive insistence on the

¹⁶ *LG*, 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁰ *Communio notio*, 3.

²¹ *Theological Encyclopedia*, 1334

²² Bokenkotter, *A Concise History*, 227.

value of method and techniques was promoted by some, sufficient attention is still not given to the demands and to the originality of that pedagogy which is proper to the faith”; difficulties in inculturation, “to know how to transmit the Gospel within the cultural horizons of the peoples to whom it is proclaimed, in such a way that it can be really perceived as Good News for the lives of people and of society”; and finally “education for missionary activity ‘*ad gentes*’. Frequently, ordinary catechesis gives only marginal and inconsistent attention to the missions.”²³

Finally, the *Directory* noted that,

Various problems exist with regard to the content of catechesis: there are certain doctrinal *lacunae* concerning the truth about God and man; about sin and grace and about eschatology; there is a need for a more solid moral formation; presentations of the history of the Church are inadequate; and too little importance is given to her social teaching; in some regions there has been a proliferation of catechisms and texts, the products of particular initiatives whose selective tendencies and emphases are so differing as to damage that convergence necessary for the unity of the faith.”²⁴

Clearly, there is direct link between these “difficulties” and the “deficiencies” in Buechlein’s report.

Pre-Conciliar Catechetical Renewal

The history of catechetics in the 20th century is replete with efforts to hand on the faith in ways that would stimulate the response of faith and desire for conversion in the hearts of those being catechized.

In 1905 Pope Pius X promulgated *Acerbo Nimis* (*Handing on Christian Doctrine by Teaching*). At the turn of the century hope was cultivated by trust in progress, sparked by scientific and technological revolutions. However, in 1900 Pope Leo XII wrote, “The outlook on the future is by no means free from anxiety; on the contrary, there are many serious reasons for alarm, on account of numerous and long-standing causes of evil, of both a public and private nature.”²⁵ For Leo, Jesus Christ was the solution to any anxiety or evil overshadowing the beginnings of the new century. “Hence, by God’s eternal decree the

²³ *GCD* 30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 30, To reiterate the deficiencies found in the American catechetical texts: the treatment of the Trinity, of Christ especially his divinity, the ecclesial nature of catechesis, Christian anthropology, on God’s initiative in the world with an overemphasis on man, grace, sacraments, original sin and sin in general, Christian moral life, and eschatology.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 4; citing Leo XIII, *Tametsi futura prospicientibus*, 4.

salvation of all men, both severally and collectively, depends upon Jesus Christ.”²⁶ He added, “What hope of salvation can they have who abandon the very principle and foundation of life? Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”²⁷

Pius X echoed his predecessor, “...we are forced to agree with those who hold the chief cause of the present indifference and, as it were, infirmity of soul, and the serious evils that result from it, is to be found above all in ignorance of things divine.”²⁸ *Acerbo nimis* was addressed to Bishops, who were in turn to instruct their priests as how to spark a catechetical renewal. His papal motto, “To Restore All Things in Christ” was the impetus of *Acerbo nimis*.

For Pius, “The task of the catechist is to take up one or other of the truths of Faith or of Christian morality and then explain it in all its parts; and since the amendment of life is the chief aim of his instruction...moving his hearers and clearly pointing out to them how to regulate their own conduct.”²⁹ He stressed the importance of Revelation and the assent of faith, the catechetical obligations of the parish priest, and the importance of a catechetical lesson plan which served to cultivate the “baptismal seed.” He set forth catechetical regulations, and re-established the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. He also stressed the importance of preparation, “let him always remember that he never will be able to teach Christian doctrine to children or adults without first giving himself to very careful study and preparation.”³⁰ He concluded by exhorting priests and catechists to zeal and love for doctrine.

His successor Pius XI instituted within the Sacred Congregation of the Council (Congregation for the Clergy) “a catechetical office, whose special work is to guide and to promote the catechetical movement everywhere throughout the world.”³¹ He surveyed the bishops concerning catechesis in their dioceses, and then published his desires in *Provido Sane Consilio*. “Practical although it indeed is, *Provido sane consilio* fairly pulses with an animating spirit, nothing other than the same love for the doctrine of the faith and concern for

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 5.

²⁸ *Acerbo Nimis*, 1.

²⁹ Ibid., 13.

³⁰ Ibid., 27.

³¹ Congregation for the Council, Catechetical Office, *Provido sane consilio*. Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, 17.

the purity and integrity of the deposit which has been the constant preoccupation of the Catholic Church across the ages.”³²

There were many attempts at catechetical renewal, particularly in France and Germany, but only one movement will be analyzed here because of its relation to the post-conciliar renewal.

Kerygmatic Catechesis

In 1963, Gerard Sloyan described difficulties in catechesis in the United States, including “the catechetical renewal is suffering from the zeal of some of its protagonists.”³³ He continued,

Unfortunately, in too many parts of the country the battles lines are drawn between the “kerygmatics” and the “anti-kerygmatics”, neither side being unduly encumbered by the facts. We speak here chiefly of dissent on the local level, but occasionally there will be resonances nationally. There are a number of watchwords: sacraments before commandments or after commandments; salvation history *si*, Bible history *no*; religion as the proclamation of good news or religion as a divine obligation laid on us not without some cost in pain. And so on....Ill digested by its partisans and digested not at all by its opponents, the heart of the renewal is but seldom described as a Catholic treasure we have always had which has undergone temporary obscuration (i.e., for two millennia and more).³⁴

Dissent will be addressed in later sections of this paper. The kerygmatic movement concerns us here.

Johannes Jungmann

“It is a remarkable fact that the year 1936 is cited in so many places as a turning point in the history of Catholic religious education, and this for one main reason: the publication of Josef Jungmann’s *The Good News and Our Proclamation of the Faith*. ”³⁵ Jungmann taught at the University of Innsbruck. He is “the man who was the legitimate father of many of the best results of the catechetical movement and who otherwise made an immense contribution to the modern Church, for example in the work on the liturgical renewal.”³⁶ He is also considered the father of the kerygmatic renewal.

³² Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xlv.

³³ Gerard Sloyan, “Catechetical Renewal,” *Worship* 37 (1963): 96-102.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 100-101.

³⁵ Gabriel Moran, *Catechesis of Revelation*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 20.

³⁶ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 85.

Die Frohbotschaft was translated in 1962 by Jungmann's disciple Johannes Hofinger, SJ and published as *The Good News – Yesterday and Today*. It includes Jungmann's text as well four essays that Hofinger entitled "Appraisals" of the catechetical situation in the early 1960's.

In the hands of such pioneers as Father Josef Jungmann and Father Johannes Hofinger...the modern catechetical renewal began as a worthy and serious effort to return to the sources of Christianity and to try to proclaim the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ; it aimed to do this, in a way in which the Gospel had originally been preached.³⁷

In Chapter I, Jungmann stated his concerns.

The early Church, keenly aware of the Good News proclaimed by Christ and insistently re-echoed by His chosen heralds, was exultantly happy and serenely confident in its living, whole-souled faith in that message. Compared with the peace, joy and hope of the vital Christ-centered response of that age, the faith of the generality of Catholics today contrasts all too unfavorably.³⁸

"The prevailing practice of theology in Europe in Jungmann's time has been described as 'manual theology,' a theology based on compendia or manuals that treated questions as distinct from each other, sought intelligibility by virtue of those distinctions, and pursued a precision of expression based on a specific, Neo-Scholastic vocabulary and worldview."³⁹ According to Mongoven, Jungmann did not follow the "norm;" "he questioned the emphasis placed on the methodological reform in the teaching of religion and proposed that what was needed was not a new method, but a change in the content of religious education."⁴⁰ Mongoven misinterpreted his intention. Hofinger explained Jungmann's premise, "In the process of instruction, content and method must go harmoniously together, but content is even more important than method, although never a substitute for it."⁴¹

In Austria catechesis was fundamentally formulaic, like the "Baltimore catechesis" of the United States. He departed from dry formulas but not from the deposit of faith. He "charged

³⁷ Ibid., 89.

³⁸ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 3.

³⁹ Michael Horan, "Kerygmatic Catechesis: An analysis of the writings of Jungmann and Hofinger as reflected in post-conciliar catechetical documents" (Ph. D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1989), 19.

⁴⁰ Mongoven, "The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis," 17.

⁴¹ Johannes Hofinger, "The Catechetical Sputnik," in *Modern Masters of Religious Education*, ed. Marlene Mayr (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1983), 24.

that seminary theology and catechesis were incapable of communicating the Gospel message in all its richness, simplicity, and directness.”⁴²

He believed “All that is genuinely Christian, the truly supernatural – the merciful plan of God revealed in the humanity of Christ, calling for man’s inmost participation – all this has been largely lost from sight.” He made a bold supposition: “Christianity such as this is not the Good News proclaimed by Christ.”⁴³ He, like Pius X, sought to restore all things in Christ.

Christ as the Center of Catechesis

The person of Jesus Christ was always at the center of Jungmann’s thought. He wrote,

The Mystical Christ sets forth most clearly the luminous center from which the whole of the faith grows together unto clear unity, since it is from the radiance of *Christ* that God’s merciful plan as well as its complete realization, is rendered immediately intelligible. Christ is the pivotal point of all God’s ways-those by which His mercy descends to His creation and those by which the creature mounts back to its Source. All dogmatic treatises converge about Christ. His person and work form the true core of the Christian message of salvation. In this sense, Christ may be called the center of all doctrine, in fact, of all theological disciplines. All of theology is, then, intrinsically Christocentric.⁴⁴

This foreshadows much of the post-conciliar catechetical documents. Silvio Cardinal Oddi, then prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy reflected on the christocentrism of *CT*.

As you know, the core of the document is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the message. Notice carefully that the pope does not juxtapose the teaching of Christ and the spirit of Christ, nor the historical Jesus with the Christ of faith. The Pope speaks simply of Jesus, the Word from the beginning, the Word made flesh, the Son of the Father. The Pope talks both about things Christ said and the things he did, because the Gospels recount both the words and deeds of Jesus.⁴⁵

Jungmann understood catechesis as, “...bringing the objective Christocentrism of Catholic doctrine to the state of a vitally dynamic subjective representation.”⁴⁶ He felt that this had been accomplished very well in the early Church, not at present. “In Jungmann’s judgment, catechesis emphasized doctrinal distinctions and ethical rules, but failed to provide a unitary

⁴² Mary Charles Bryce, OSB, “Evolution of Catechesis from the Catholic Reformation to the Present,” in *A Faithful Church, Issues in the History of Catechesis*, ed. John H. Westerhoff, and O. C. Edwards (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1981), 227.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁴ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 9-10.

⁴⁵ Silvio Cardinal Oddi, “Jesus Christ is the Message” in *Catechetical Instruction and the Catholic Faithful*, ed. Msgr. George A. Kelly (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1982), 18.

⁴⁶ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 11.

vision of the Christian life of faith.”⁴⁷ He stated, “although *Christianity is certainly not doctrine alone, it is nonetheless based on doctrine* – on the Good News.”⁴⁸ He asked, “Might they be right who find the remedy in a flight from the intellect, in a leap towards the irrational – towards religious feelings and experience that they think they will find in mysticism, youth movements, liturgy?”⁴⁹

The Emmaus Story

Christ’s post-resurrection appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) is often used to support the theory that only relational knowledge of Jesus is necessary. They were sure they knew what had happened to Jesus at the crucifixion. Now, they did not recognize him. They told him that the prophet from Nazareth was put to death by the chief priests and rulers, “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:21). Their senses told them that their hope was fruitless. He was dead, his body was missing. Finally they recognized him in the breaking of the bread, and pleaded with him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over” (Lk.24:29). This has been frequently used to validate religious education that is purely relational: just invite Jesus to stay with you.

Jungmann interprets the parable to refute an anti-doctrinal/anti-intellectual approach to catechesis. “And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Jungmann explained,

Perhaps it is Christ Himself who has given us the decisive answer to the problem in the episode of the disciples going to Emmaus, as recorded by St. Luke. What was the remedy for the dullness of faith of these disciples? A vital understanding of the scriptures as they unfolded his role of Suffering Servant in the Father’s merciful plan of salvation. And the result? Their hearts were aflame with a joyous enthusiastic faith that leapt into action and enkindled the spirits of others! We witness the very same process in the experience of the Apostles on Pentecost.⁵⁰

Christ’s encounter with these two disciples involved meeting their intellects and their wills: Pius X had written, “In fine, Christian teaching not only bestows on the intellect the light by which it attains truth, but from it, our will draws that ardor by which we are raised up to God and joined with him in the practice of virtue.”⁵¹ This is response of love for doctrine,

⁴⁷ Horan, “Kerygmatic catechesis,” 2.

⁴⁸ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 5.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis*, contained in Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, 5.

“...anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love.”⁵²

Jungmann commented, “On the one hand there are those who believe that religious instruction achieves its goal sufficiently when it imprints clear-cut dogmatic concepts on the minds of our youth...”⁵³ On the other, “there are those who go to the other extreme and claim that everything depends on life and activity; hence all instruction, even religious, should be reduced to observation and experience, to narrations, discussions and activities, save for the conceptual knowledge that must be had because of extrinsic reasons.”⁵⁴ The latter would become a fixture in catechesis after Vatican II. Jungmann’s position was that “...a truly effectual catechesis should impart the knowledge which will round out and perfect the world-view of the young by acquainting them with the supernatural order in which we actually are - a knowledge of God’s supreme goodness and love which will help prevent us from ever separating ourselves from God.”⁵⁵

Jungmann’s solution was an integrated catechesis. In 1936, he wrote:

The childlike submissiveness which entrusted itself without question to the motherly direction of the Church has long been shaken...From this the following conclusion must be drawn: religious teaching today cannot content itself with the mere handing on of hereditary formulas, nor can it assume, as it once did, that the traditional sum of customs, devotions, pious thoughts and practices, even intensively used, will avail to hold the faithful firmly in the Church and assure security and nourishment for their religious life.⁵⁶

Some, like Horan and Mongoven, believe that Jungmann was giving tacit permission to remove the doctrinal content of catechesis. However, he wrote “Today religious teaching must lead the faithful to a vital understanding of the content of the faith itself, that they may interiorly grasp it, and thus grow to spiritual maturity and proper independence in religious life. It must lead in other words to the step of Christian formation.”⁵⁷

⁵² *Roman Catechism*, Preface 20; cf. 1 Cor. 13:8; CCC, 25.

⁵³ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 95: “This is the intellectualism of the so-called *Lernschule* (School of Formal Learning).”

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: “This is the irrationalism of today’s *Arbeitsschule* (Progressive School) and other pedagogical methods which rush to activity and the concrete without conceptual framework.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Horan noted the divergence and convergence between the work of the kerygmatics and the post-conciliar catechetical documents. He downplays their understanding of maturity, which would be lived out in Christian witness. He believed that the concept of maturity was absent for the most part in the Conciliar documents, but admits its presence in the *GCD*, that in the maturation of faith there is a union of both *fides qua* and *fides quae*.⁵⁸ It is present in *CT*, "...the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself..."⁵⁹ Hofinger stressed, "That Father Jungmann always considered a mature Christian life as the real aim of all catechetical activity is obvious from an unbiased study of his writings."⁶⁰

Throughout *Good News*, Jungmann held that the proclamation of the Good News, the *kerygma*, was the necessary foundation and then function of catechesis. "As its name implied, the kerygmatic movement still very much aimed at imparting a message; it still focused on the content. Its chief aim was nothing else but to 'present the truth of our faith as an organic whole. Its core [was] the good news of our redemption in Christ. Its fruit [was to] be the grateful response of our love.'"⁶¹ Wrenn, perhaps consciously, provides a bridge between Jungmann and the CCC, "...all doctrine is directed to the love that never ends"; "the aim of the Catechism at presenting an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine, as regards both faith and morals."⁶²

The kerygma is "The solemn and public proclamation of salvation in Christ made in the name of God to non-Christians, it was accompanied by an appeal to signs and wonders to dispose the hearers to faith, conversion, and a return to God."⁶³ The word itself was used sixty-one times in the New Testament. "*Kerygma* was employed in an almost technical sense by NT authors to signify the manner in which an authorized preacher, *kerux*, announced the truth

⁵⁸ Horan, "Kerygmatic catechesis," 241-50.

⁵⁹ *CT*, 20.

⁶⁰ Hofinger, "The Catechetical Sputnik," 24.

⁶¹ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 89. Wrenn is quoting from Warren, *The Modern Catholic Sourcebook*, 30.

⁶² CCC, 25, 11.

⁶³ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Catholic University of America, (New York:McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 167-168.

that ‘the kingdom of God has come to you’” (Mt12: 28, Lk.11: 20).⁶⁴ The kerygma “can indeed be regarded as one of the key concepts for the description of revelation.”⁶⁵

... the NT writers are profoundly inspired by the conviction that ‘salvation’ is essentially linked with the ‘word’. And there the ‘word’ is not just information about a salvation which might be in itself and in its manifestations ‘wordless.’ Salvation is understood as the reality of the word: God himself in his epiphany is word and expresses himself as such. In this sense, kerygma is the word of salvation. The challenge of the OT prophets and finally and supremely that of Jesus of Nazareth and his envoys was not merely that they spoke of God’s name or in God’s name, but that God himself spoke in their words – in such a way that all, speakers and hearers, understood that salvation or loss depended on responsive self-communication of the word of God.⁶⁶

John Paul addressed the *kerygma*,

Thus through catechesis the Gospel *kerygma* (the initial ardent proclamation by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith) is gradually deepened, developed in its implicit consequences, explained in language that includes an appeal to reason, and channeled towards Christian practice in the Church and the world.⁶⁷

He does not see the *kerygma* as a one-time proposition of the faith. Throughout the document, he desires that catechesis must be an ‘evangelizing catechesis,’ the proclamation of the Good news must be carried through all catechesis.

All this is no less evangelical than the kerygma, in spite of what is said by certain people who consider that catechesis necessarily rationalizes, dries up and eventually kills all that is living, spontaneous and vibrant in the kerygma. The truths studied in catechesis are the same truths that touched the person's heart when he heard them for the first time. Far from blunting or exhausting them, the fact of knowing them better should make them even more challenging and decisive for one's life.⁶⁸

These points are seen in the New Testament. Both Peter and Paul delivered the *kerygma*. Peter’s (Acts 2:14-36) was given immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles on Pentecost. What was the response of the crowd? ‘What are we to do, my brothers?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:37-38).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ *Encyclopedia of Theology*, 797 .

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ *CT*, 25.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

The Christians of Corinth had difficulty understanding the resurrection. Paul responded by writing, “Brothers, I want to remind you of the Gospel I preached to you, which you received and in which you stand firm.” He recounted the *kerygma*, and then asked,

But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? ...For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable of all people (1 Cor. 15, 16-19.)

While Peter and Paul gave similar accounts in their proclamation of the *kerygma*, their audiences differed. Peter spoke to “devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem” (Acts 2:5). They accepted the faith and were baptized, “three thousand persons were added that day” (2:41).

Paul proclaimed the Gospel to people who had accepted the faith. He saw the need to proclaim it again, so that they could understand and convert once more.

Wrenn quotes Kelly’s *Early Christian Creeds*, “It is impossible to overlook the emphasis on the transmission of authoritative doctrine that is found in the New Testament.”⁶⁹ Wrenn continued, “This ‘authoritative doctrine’ being transmitted of course is nothing else but the ‘good news’ itself, the message of salvation in and through Jesus Christ working through his Church.”⁷⁰ His explanation of the *kerygma* echoes Jungmann’s desire for catechesis to be rooted in the proclamation of the good news. “The apostles appointed and sent out by Jesus, like the successors they themselves appointed, the bishops of the Church, were nothing else but heralds of faith in and salvation through Jesus Christ.”⁷¹

He concluded, “Such proclamations of faith always possessed definite content or doctrine; this latter word, ‘doctrine’, originates from the Latin word *docere*, ‘to teach’, and means ‘that which is taught’; the believer in Jesus was expected and obliged to hear this doctrine and assent to it; it was part of having faith in Jesus.”⁷²

Jungmann discusses this content’s existence,

...in early Christian literature of systematic summaries of Christian teaching, especially since they did not serve as a scientific [theological] purpose but rather the

⁶⁹ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York:Longman, 1972), 7-8.

⁷⁰ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 27.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid. 28.

interests of proclaiming the Christian message, thus enabling us to see what doctrinal points were joined together into a unified whole...They take on the form of a compendium of faith during the course of the second century with the appearance of the Apostles' Creed.⁷³

For Jungmann, christocentrism "should contribute to an easier and more vital understanding of the distinctive content of our message, to the recognition that the many doctrines of faith are the development of a single vitally dynamic nucleus, and to an awareness of the grandeur and beauty of Christianity."⁷⁴ The effect: "The concentration of doctrine around this distinctive central core brings about a more secure hold on individual beliefs, precisely because they are seen within a cohesive unity."⁷⁵

Jungmann was not only concerned with non-believers, but with all members of the Church, to bring them to conversion of heart and union with Jesus Christ. In order to reach the goal of mature Christian life, "It is not enough to provide a correct explanation of Christian doctrine. God's main intention in all of his speaking to man in general and in particular his plan of salvation with regard to the audience being addressed, must become the principle for the adequate selection, arrangement, and presentation of the catechetical content."⁷⁶

Concerns

There was a great deal of criticism of *Die Frohbotschaft* as soon as it was published. Many were suspicious of Jungmann's development of kerygmatic theology. It was pulled from the market within a year of its publication. He felt that in seminaries, the scientific approach to theology was detrimental to the effectiveness of the priest who would be the main catechist in his parish. That form of theological study "may have succeeded in a rational penetration of the Word God, but it did not satisfactorily prepare for an adequate presentation of the Gospel."⁷⁷ Priests were the primary catechists in Austria at that time. Jungmann felt that their training was crucial. This moved him to desire and support a radical shift to a "kerygmatic only" theology in seminaries. This was not received well, and Hofinger believed that "The support that Father Jungmann gave for some time to such a solution positively hurt his cause in the critical years of the late 1930's and early 1940's."⁷⁸

⁷³ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 20

⁷⁴ Ibid., 78.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 78-79.

⁷⁶ Hofinger, "The Catechetical Sputnik," 24.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 26.

Francis D. Kelly listed the limitations of what he calls the “Kerygmatic Stage” of religious education. He believed that in kerygmatic catechesis, “Past history was so central that God’s continuing action was not emphasized; the link with daily human life and experience was sometimes not adequately made.”⁷⁹

Another concern was Jungmann’s belief that authentic catechesis occurred only in the early Church. Wrenn observed that while the initial kerygmatic movement was “a distinct asset for religious education in the Catholic Church... it remains true that one of the principal motivations for the new approach was Jungmann’s apparent conviction that all catechesis that had come before him was lamentably deficient. Apparently the Church had not really been able to teach her faith properly since the earliest centuries.”⁸⁰ “The early Church was always held in high esteem, because it was supposed to embody Christianity in its purest form. It was undoubtedly a high point in Church history, though its normative character has been exaggerated and oversimplified, especially in more critical views, which were influenced by a steady ‘deterioration.’”⁸¹

Horan wrote, “His focus however was not the retrieval of a nostalgic past. Rather, Jungmann was motivated by the desire to renew the present catechetical situation in which he found himself by drawing attention to the integrated and unitary features of the catechesis in the classical Christian period.”⁸² The Council has done this in the process of *ressourcement*.

Kevane emphasized, “The Church of the Apostles, then, had a definite program of catechetical teaching...The content was divine revelation itself, received from Jesus Christ the Divine Teacher as a deposit of faith.... The death of the last Apostle, sixty or seventy years after the crucifixion of Jesus, saw the Church busily carrying out its mandate.”⁸³ Kevane identifies the “Vincentian Canon” as, “...the summational principle of the Early Church by which it expressed and implemented its concern to keep the precious deposit intact, unadulterated by human innovations, and hence faithful to Jesus Christ.”⁸⁴ Vincent’s held that the doctrine of faith rests on antiquity, which he perceives to be in reality the

⁷⁹ Francis D. Kelly, *The Mystery we Proclaim*, 1st ed. (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1993), 132.

⁸⁰ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 91.

⁸¹ *Encyclopedia of Theology*, “Early Church,” 379.

⁸² Horan, “Kerygmatic catechesis,” 19

⁸³ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xxii-xxiii.

Tradition of the Church. “But here some one perhaps will ask, ‘Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church’s interpretation?’”⁸⁵ He concluded, “Therefore it is necessary on account of so great intricacies of such various errors, that the rule for the right understanding of the prophets and apostles should be framed in accordance with the standard of Ecclesiastical and Catholic interpretation.”⁸⁶

While Jungmann depended on the early Church for the content, inspiration and impetus of kerygmatic catechesis,⁸⁷ he did not make direct reference to Tradition itself. It is implicit however. He observed, “A comparison between the proclamation of faith of the early Church...and a modern catechism or theological compendium presents a rather profound contrast. On the one hand we find a simple message, a graphic picture; on the other, a complicated structure of concepts, divisions, distinctions.”⁸⁸ He concludes that they are related. “But the contrast is no greater, we are justly reminded, than that between the seed and the full grown-plant of the parable of God’s Kingdom (applying it, however, only to the particular area of doctrine). Despite the differences of appearance, both are of the same nature.”⁸⁹

As the seed had to expand and change its form, so also God’s word, under the supervision of the magisterium, had to be sown in the soil of man’s inquiring mind, had to send out roots and branches into the many regions of human ignorance, had to give answers to many questions. And thus it became a tree in which the birds of the air could dwell. From the simple preaching of the Apostles there arose the bold structure of Catholic dogma and scholastic theology.⁹⁰

His synthesis of the development of doctrine resembles that of *DV*.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Ibid., xxvii.

⁸⁵ *A Commonitory, for the Antiquity and Universality of the Catholic Faith Against the Profane Novelties of all Heresies* 5; trans. Rev. S. A. Heurtly. *The Commonitorium* deals with the development of Catholic dogma and is a landmark in the history of that subject. It also gives testimony to the scholarship of the author. Most of the questions raised by Vincent were controversial ones, and his answers have continued to provoke discussion among theologians ever since. Cardinal Bellarmine, in his fight against Reformation heresy, made frequent use of the arguments in Vincent’s work, and in later times the famous convert from Anglicanism, Cardinal Newman, was strongly influenced in his thought by a study of the writings of this monk of ancient Gaul. *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*, Michale Walsh, ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990. 154

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ He offered a cursory summary of the history of catechesis in *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, and then a more detailed analysis in *Handing on the Faith*, chapter 1.

⁸⁸ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 27.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “This tradition which comes from the Apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (Lk 2:19, 51), through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities

Vincent of Lerins asked,

But perhaps someone says: Will there be no progress in the religion of Christ? Certainly there should be, even a great and rich progress...only it must in truth be a progress in Faith and not an alteration in Faith. For progress it is necessary that something should increase of itself, for alteration, however, that something should change from one thing to another.⁹²

The dissent from *Humanae Vitae* was couched in the notion of progress, but was an alteration. In the name of progress, the deposit of faith ceased to be a concern for many American theologians and catechists.⁹³

Jungmann compares religion in the 30's with that of the Enlightenment. It was a symptom of Modernism and is true of the post-modern era.

Although the Enlightenment in its most arrogant form may have been the special concern of the eighteenth century, the newly awakened impulse of our day to see for oneself and to judge for oneself is far from spent, particularly in the life of the soul. The spirit of the enlightenment has rather spread out from the urban middle classes into the broad masses. Millions have believed that they could find the direct answer for their questions – even a new Gospel – in the violent simplified view of a Karl Marx.⁹⁴

Jungmann did not address Modernism *per se*. Issues that concerned Jungmann appear Kevane's commentary on *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. "This movement was essentially

which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth. For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her" (DV, 8).

⁹² *Commonitory*, 23.

⁹³ Bouyer asserts, "No idea was more foreign to the ancients than the modern idea that the multiplication of definitions constitutes progress. This proliferation corresponds (in their view) to scars on the Body of truth, inflicted by the errors over which it triumphs. The only genuine progress in the knowledge of God, beyond what has been transmitted from the beginning by Christ and the apostles, results, according to the fathers, from the transition from faith to vision on the last day. The only anticipation that we can have of it is not in doctrinal development, either in scientific theology or even in dogmatic definitions that constitute it, but in what they call the "science of the saints": the gnosis of Irenaeus and Clement, the "mystical theology" of the Pseudo--Areopagite--the ineffable glimpse of the eternity of the blessed, which can be gratuitously communicated by God to those whose hearts and minds are sufficiently purified, whom the divine agape has sufficiently enflamed that they may have some foretaste of the beatific vision. Short of this, this mystical experience is essentially impossible to convey for it is inseparable from the only qualitative progress, which is progress in personal holiness through assimilation to Christ, in "faith working through love" (Gal 5:3) (*The Church of God Body of Christ and Temple of the Spirit* [Chicago, Ill.: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982], 355-356).

⁹⁴ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 7. This will be seen especially in the work of Thomas Groome, analyzed in Chapter IV.

against the deposit as such, holding that ‘the Articles of Faith did not have the same meaning for Christians of the Early Church as they do for Christians today.’”⁹⁵

This treatment of Jungmann is cursory and the attention shifts to Hofinger but the last word belongs to John Paul, who desired that the *Catechism* and the *GDC* be utilized, because “the religious situation of young people and adults calls for a catechesis which is more kerygmatic and more organic in its presentation of the contents of the faith.”⁹⁶

Johannes Hofinger, SJ

“Hofinger was the principal presenter and developer of Jungmann’s ideas, although other authors also contributed to kerygmatic renewal in catechetics.”⁹⁷ Horan continued, “It is well known that Hofinger was the former student who proposed and refined Jungmann’s ideas for use in the United States and in mission situations.”⁹⁸ Hofinger regarded Jungmann as “the model of the Christian scholar, teacher, and author who, with deep faith, devoted all his time and strength to his scientific task.”⁹⁹ His collaboration with Jungmann was “pleasant but not exciting: the personal contact with him was much more inspiring than fascinating. In the course of the years there developed between us a wonderful friendship in which I was always the one who primarily received.”¹⁰⁰ He was the heir apparent. “I had the impression that he felt I understood him well and considered me as the main inheritor, populizer, and developer of his catechetical thought.”¹⁰¹

Hofinger regarded *Die Frohbotschaft* as “one of the deepest and most influential books of the twentieth century on religious education. No other single book did as much to pave the way for the comprehensive pastoral renewal as intended and delineated by Vatican Council II.”¹⁰² He added, “These basic insights of Father Jungmann’s book express my own catechetical creed.”¹⁰³

⁹⁵ Kevane, *Teaching the Catholic Faith Today*, xlii, quoting *Pascendi dominici gregis*, Pius X’s encyclical concerning Modernism.

⁹⁶ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, (January 22, 1999) 69.

⁹⁷ Horan, “Kerygmatic catechesis,” 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁹ Hofinger, “The Catechetical Sputnik,” 21.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Hofinger's activity included: the application of kerygmatic catechesis; the International Catechetical Study Weeks, which were influential both in authentic catechetical renewal and in catechetical deconstruction after Vatican II; and the collaboration with Sr. Maria de la Cruz Aymes and later Francis J. Buckley, SJ in writing Sadlier's *On Our Way Series*.

Hofinger published *The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine: The Good News and its Proclamation* in 1957, republished after the International Study Week on Mission Catechetics held in Eichstätt in 1962, and again in 1968, with Francis Buckley. "This new, third edition clearly reflects the impact of Vatican II on catechetics."¹⁰⁴ It is this edition that will be referred to primarily.

In its preface, Hofinger explained that in the light of the Council, it was necessary to "rethink, reorganize, and considerably expand" Part Two of the original text.¹⁰⁵ "The basic principles remained in tact; their expression and amplification in the light of the Council I entrusted to my collaborator, Father Francis. J. Buckley."¹⁰⁶ This edition of the text is dedicated to Josef Jungmann, on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

Hofinger briefly described catechetical methodology in the 20th century up to the Council. One point goes to the heart of the aforesaid difficulties and deficiencies.

Beginning with the second period of the catechetical movement, however,¹⁰⁷ the realization became evermore widespread that a true catechetical renewal must also concern itself with the *content of religious education*. This does not mean, of course, that traditional Catholic doctrine be changed in order to conform with modern fashions of thought, nor that it be watered down to suit the secularized outlook of modern society.¹⁰⁸

He explained that deficiencies in catechesis "demanded that the catechetical renewal give its attention to the question of the content of religious education."¹⁰⁹ Hofinger identified the vital themes in Jungmann's work: the full integrity of content and method during the time of the early Church and the Christocentric nature of catechesis. He echoed his mentor, "Our teaching of the faith, both in catechesis and in sermons does not sufficiently stress what is

¹⁰⁴ Johannes Hofinger, SJ, and Francis J. Buckley, SJ, *The Good News and Its Proclamation* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1968), viii.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Immediately before World War II. He is obviously talking about Jungmann's work.

¹⁰⁸ Hofinger and Buckley, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, 6.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

essential in Christian doctrine.”¹¹⁰ He reiterated Jungmann’s belief that Christian doctrine is ultimately the Gospel, and that it should be received in joy.

Hofinger had hope for the third stage of the catechetical renewal. “This stage is characterized by a harmonious synthesis of method and content, God’s word understood as addressed to men. The method is seen as the handmaid of the message: the message is seen as expressed in human words for human hearts.”¹¹¹

The *GCD* did not address the relationship between content and method, although it pays great attention to each. John Paul did. In choosing suitable pedagogical methods,

The choice made will be a valid one to the extent that, far from being dictated by more or less subjective theories or prejudices stamped with a certain ideology, it is inspired by the humble concern to stay closer to a content that must remain intact. The method and language used must truly be means for communicating the whole and not just a part of “the words of eternal life (Jn. 6:69)” and the “ways of life (Acts 2:82).”¹¹²

He believed that, “A technique is of value in catechesis only to the extent that it serves the faith that is to be transmitted and learned; otherwise it is of no value.”¹¹³ The *GDC* spoke of it in even stronger language, instructing those engaged in catechesis to avoid “any opposition or artificial separation or presumed neutrality between method and content. It [the Church] affirms, rather, their necessary correlation and interaction.”¹¹⁴ It also reminds those engaged in catechetical work that “it is easy to fall into a ‘content-method’ dualism.”¹¹⁵

Hofinger lamented, “While the importance of religious knowledge was over-emphasized, religious formation and religious living were unintentionally neglected.”¹¹⁶ He admits that there was zeal for the memorization of the catechism, which would have satisfied Pius X’s desire for the abolition of religious ignorance, “But, even where true understanding was the aim, and an aim that was achieved to a high degree, the heart and its education were still neglected.”¹¹⁷ He added, “Religious knowledge in itself is not a real goal for our teaching; it

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 7.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 11.

¹¹² *CT*, 31.

¹¹³ Ibid., 59.

¹¹⁴ *GDC*, 149.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 30.

¹¹⁶ Hofinger and Buckley, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, 23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

is only a means. The goal of religious instruction is religious living, or, even better, full initiation into the mystery of Christ.”¹¹⁸ Like Jungmann, Hofinger was determined that catechesis should be Christocentric.

Hofinger, like John Paul, saw understanding as a means to conversion, and thus penetration into the mystery of Christ. Knowledge, even religious knowledge, is not to be attained for its own sake. Hofinger’s desired to see Christ as the center of all catechetical teaching.¹¹⁹

In regards to content, “The message entrusted to us is made up of many different doctrines, but it is, by its very nature, far more than a list of truths. It is a wonderful unity with one central idea which we must bring out as clearly as we can.”¹²⁰ Jungmann exercised the same belief in the unity of the faith. This unity is the crucial element of the Church’s discussion of the hierarchy of truths and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Hofinger believed it was “a catechetical crime to transmit to our students only some incoherent fragments instead of the organic divine message?”¹²¹

In Part I of *Proclamation*, Hofinger described the fundamental doctrines that he believed should be included in all catechesis: Mary; grace; Church; sacraments, especially the Eucharist; morality.¹²² Except for Mary, these doctrines were deficient in catechetical texts by 1997.¹²³ He posits these doctrines within the mystery of Christ. He asserted that “Once the catechist has understood what the ‘mystery of Christ’ really means...then it will be relatively easy to see the other fundamental teachings of Christianity in the right order and to put them into their proper place in our teaching. And so all the doctrines of the faith can be easily and organically included.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Hofinger’s personal Christocentrism is illustrated in a reflection on his life given by the Most Reverend Ricardo Ramirez, CSB, Bishop of Las Cruces, New Mexico. “I learned much from him. May I simply point out two things: he taught me how to make the sign of the cross and how to say the Mass. The sign of the cross he made was a meditation on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. He crossed himself slowly, with his eyes closed - perhaps in order to avoid all distractions. His Masses were an experience to behold: he smiled beautifully, particularly at the elevation of the consecrated bread and wine. I cannot help but imagine that this was the attitude of Jesus at the Last Supper: a surrender of self in a spirit of joy and gratitude for the privilege of offering himself that others might live that the world might be glorified with him” (given at Johannes Hofinger Catechetical Conference, New Orleans, LA, January 3, 1992).

¹²⁰ Hofinger and Buckley, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, 15

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 19-22.

¹²³ Mary does not appear in the deficiencies.

¹²⁴ Hofinger and Buckley, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, 18. For clarity in the comparison of Hofinger’s position on doctrine and the ‘deficiencies’, they are listed again: the treatment of the Trinity, of Christ especially

In Part II, Hofinger offered sample lessons. “The Second Vatican Council reminded us of our duty to reform the Church in accordance with the Gospel and to discuss the word of God with our fellow Christians so that we may proclaim it more faithfully and effectively in the world of today.”¹²⁵ “But what are these essentials? How are they to be presented in organic unity?”¹²⁶

Hofinger’s systematic plan was within the context of salvation history, which was Jungmann’s vision for religious education. God’s revelation and man’s response is the pattern for the lessons. They are reminiscent of Augustine’s approach in *De Catechizandis Rudibus* in which the doctrine is taught within the context of the narration of salvation history. Like Augustine, Hofinger has three “movements”: the biblical narrative, the exposition or instruction, and the application.

Hofinger’s Essentials

Preliminary Instruction: The riches of our vocation – the Father calls us through Christ to his Kingdom

Section I: The Eternal Love of God for Us

God the Creator

1. God and His Creation 2. The Elevation 3. The Fall – Original Sin 4. The Covenant

5. Types of Christ

Christ the Savior

6. The Incarnation

The Public Life of Christ

7. Baptism of Jesus 8. The Temptations of Christ 9. The Miracles of Jesus 10. The Words of Jesus 11. Christ and his Disciples 12. The Titles of Jesus 13. The Passion and Death of Christ 14. The Resurrection and Ascension

The Holy Spirit

15. The Holy Spirit 16. The Most Holy Trinity

The Church

his divinity, the ecclesial nature of catechesis, Christian anthropology, on God’s initiative in the world with an overemphasis on man’s, grace, sacraments, original sin and sin in general, Christian moral life, and eschatology.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 103

¹²⁶ Ibid. The *GCD* and *CT* repeatedly call attention to the organic unity of the faith is vital. It comes from the organic unity of the Church with Christ. This concept is an essential element of *Lumen Gentium* (cf. *LG*, 4).

17.The Church in Action 18.The Church in Being

The Sacraments

19.The Effect of Baptism 20.The Obligation Contracted at Baptism 21.The Institution of the Holy Eucharist 22.The Sacrifice of the Mass 23.The Institution of the Sacrament of Penance 24.Christian Suffering and Death, and our Sacramental Preparation for *Definitive Union with Christ*

Section II: The Response of Our Grateful Love, How We Are To Answer God's Love by Christian Life Made up of Prayer and Action

Our Filial Response by Christian Prayer: Direct Worship

25.The Excellence of Christian Prayer 26.Filial Worship

Our Filial Answer By Christian Work: Indirect Worship

27.The Christianization of the Family 28.The Sacrament of Matrimony and the Sanctity of the Body 29.Fraternal Love and Assistance 30.The Right Attitude of the Christian towards Material Goods 31.Love of Truth and Esteem of Good Reputation

Longing for Perfect Worship

The Last Things

32.Death and Particular Judgment 33.The Resurrection and General Judgment

Hell and Heaven

34.Hell 35.Heaven

While this appears to be a catalogic presentation of the faith, he desired that those being catechized achieve union with Christ. Horan acknowledged that Hofinger “spent his career promoting a catechesis which emphasizes Christianity as a relationship based on God’s loving invitation (revelation) and a grateful human response (faith).”¹²⁷

Like Jungmann, he did not renew the content by destroying it. The list is contained in both the pre and post-Conciliar editions of *Proclamation*, and are contained in the pre and immediate post-Conciliar *On Our Way Series*. The *GCD* had also expressed concern for the organic unity of the content of faith but did not “...show a suitable way for ordering the truths of faith according to an organic plan in a kind of synthesis which would take just

¹²⁷ Horan, “Kerygmatic Catechesis,” 26.

account of their objective hierarchy...”¹²⁸ Instead, it treated “...some of the more outstanding elements contained in the saving message, elements which certainly are organically interrelated, especially in those particular features which must be brought out more clearly in a new, adapted catechesis which pursues its goal faithfully.”¹²⁹ However, it repeatedly expressed the desire that catechesis should teach the entire content of the faith.¹³⁰

The *GCD* desired that the content be delivered in a way that could be best understood by those receiving it, but could not stop at an initial and simple catechesis, “...it must be interested in presenting the content in an always more detailed and developed manner, so that individuals among the faithful and the Christian community may arrive at an always more profound and vital acceptance of the Christian message, and may judge the concrete conditions and practices of Christian life by the light of revelation.”¹³¹ The necessary elements of catechesis were to be taught within the contexts of: Christocentrism, Trinitarian Theocentrism, Salvation, Hierarchy of Truths, Salvation History, which includes emphasis on the Paschal Mystery and Eschatology.¹³²

The lack of specificity is problematic, and led to grave difficulties, offset in the US by *Basic Teachings* in 1973.

Insertion into the Mystery of Christ

Hofinger saw the goal of religious instruction (as would *CT*) as “religious living, or even better yet, full initiation into the mystery of Christ.”¹³³ He was adamant about the christocentric nature of catechesis. He gives concrete examples of how the major doctrines, listed earlier, are connected to the mystery of Christ.

What of the student? “As God’s heralds, we are to present Christian doctrine to him, but not merely as something he must ‘study’ and ‘know.’ We are to make him aware of God’s personal invitation to him, first given at baptism.”¹³⁴ “And he should realize that God is waiting for his answer to his invitation, for his ‘yes’ arising from his Christian faith, for his

¹²⁸ *GCD*, 36.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 40-44.

¹³³ Hofinger, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 23.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

yes gratefully given to Christ, and to a life lived in and with Christ.”¹³⁵ Like Jungmann, he stressed that the response is not only by the intellect, but by the will – conversion. “Such faith is our fundamental answer to God’s gift.”¹³⁶ He asserted that “Our catechetical instruction, then from the very beginning must be directed toward this full faith in Christ and willingness to follow Him. Our first and fundamental task is to awaken, deepen, and gradually as instruments of the Holy Spirit, to perfect this willing faith. Religious instruction is, above all, instruction in faith.”¹³⁷

He posited four means for insertion into the mystery of Christ.

Bible- the simple biblical-historical catechesis which, through the telling of the good tidings, introduces the person for the first time to the mystery of Christ

Liturgy – guidance in living the sacramental life of the Church and elementary instruction about the Church’s worship

Doctrine – systematic catechesis following the order of the catechism and presenting the good tidings in logical order

Testimony of Christian living – the witness of a Christian life by individuals, but most especially the educators and by the community of the faithful as the vivid expression of God’s revelation faithfully received and lived by man; it is ordinarily the way that leads the young Christian and the non-Christian to a first personal contact with Christ and the Church.¹³⁸

“Modern catechists all agree on the areas of emphasis if anyone-child or adult-is to be properly introduced to the mystery of Christ.”¹³⁹ The “triad of Bible, liturgy, doctrine means not three independent ways of teaching, but rather a Trinitarian order forming one organic whole.”¹⁴⁰ He also desired a pedagogy that is gradual and progressive initiation into the mystery of Christ, which is the divine pedagogy, as articulated in *DV*.

Missionary Catechesis and Its Influence on Renewal

Hofinger made a unique contribution to catechetics as a missionary. In China, he trained seminarians for missionary work. To do so, he prepared a schema, “treating the main themes

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 27. This is the first mention of these four means, Hofinger elaborates on them in Chapters 5,6,7.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 28, a generality that will be proved untrue.

of the Christian message as the joyful news of God's love for humanity."¹⁴¹ He reminisced, "Years later Father Jungmann told me that he had earnestly considered objecting to my missionary assignment and asking for my appointment as his assistant and eventual successor, but his respect of my missionary vocation let him stand off."¹⁴² During World War II the seminary relocated to Manila. The Communist takeover of China destroyed any opportunity for Chinese men to study for the priesthood. The seminary closed in 1958.

Hofinger's missionary work did not cease. By 1953 he began the Institute for Mission Apologetics, which was renamed the East Asian Pastoral Institute. He used the structure developed at the Institute when he taught during the summer at the University of Notre Dame in 1954. It also became the framework of *Proclamation*. He became known internationally "I circled the globe sixteen times. Soon I was called the catechetical Sputnik."¹⁴³

Catechetical Study Weeks

The International Catechetical Study Weeks were originally intended to discuss liturgical renewal. They were held in Assisi (1956), Nijmegen¹⁴⁴ (1959), Eichstätt (1960), Bangkok (1962), Katigondo (1964), Manila (1967), and Medellin (1968). Hofinger served as the secretary general for these meetings. "In each case, the same concern: the presentation of the Christian message in today's world; on each occasion, too, the very same protagonist, the indefatigable Father Hofinger who was the initiator."¹⁴⁵

Warren placed the proceedings of the Study Weeks in his *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*. "Without proper attention to the study weeks, one tends to distort and in other ways misunderstand what has happened in the [catechetical] movement."¹⁴⁶ Wrenn also saw their import,

It is possible to trace how the catechetical movement's gradual loss of interest in the content of the faith – the Christian message itself- came about. The quickest and easiest way to do this is to look at the results of a number of the International Catechetical Study Weeks that were prominent features on the catechetical scene in

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Horan, "Kerygmatic catechesis," 34.

¹⁴² Hofinger, "The Catechetical Sputnik," 25.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 29.

¹⁴⁴ Jungmann was in attendance.

¹⁴⁵ Luis Erdozian, SJ, "The Evolution of Catechetics, A Survey of the Six International Study Weeks on Catechetics," *Lumen Vitae* 25 (1970): 7.

¹⁴⁶ Warren, *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 23.

the 1960's and had an enormous influence on the direction taken by the catechetical movement and on its own self-understanding.¹⁴⁷

The experience of those attending this week was the impetus for future meetings. Hofinger believed the proceedings of Nijmegen and Eichstätt had a direct impact on the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴⁸ Many, including Horan, Mongoven, and Warren, felt that Eichstätt was the pivotal meeting. Canadian Bishop G. Emmett Carter commented,

How to sum up the general impression of Eichstätt? Perhaps thus: in a world where living has become so complicated with technology, the need for simplicity is becoming the characteristic need for the Church. The life of Christ, the liturgy, the Scripture...the simple message of the Gospel, told in the Gospel setting and relived by each of us in the Church, whether on the African plain to Madison Avenue; this to me was the message of Eichstätt.¹⁴⁹

Wrenn believed, "It was the conference *par excellence* devoted to the kerygmatic movement."¹⁵⁰ Many credit Eichstätt as the inspiration for the *GCD*.

The principal concerns of Eichstätt were that catechesis: 1. carries out the command of Christ to proclaim Christ's message of salvation; 2. proclaims the merciful love of the Father and the Good News of the Kingdom; 3. is Christ-centered, Christ as the fulfillment of the Father's loving design; 4. proclaims that Christ lives and works in his Church through the Holy Spirit and the ministry of his shepherds; 5. emphasizes that worship is the heart of the Christian community; 6. teaches us to respond to God's call by an inner change of heart manifested in a life of faith and hope and loving obedience to his commands; 7. makes the Christian aware of

¹⁴⁷ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 92.

¹⁴⁸ Hofinger, "The Catechetical Sputnik," 30. In the text, Hofinger offers a brief reflection on Vatican II which is important within the parameters of this paper. "It did not present any specific document on catechesis, but its whole tenor saw the catechetical work of the church clearly as a realization of its mission to bring man the good news of salvation, and to guide man in his response to faith. One of the most important catechetical contributions of Vatican II is its description of authentic faith: 'By the obedience of faith man entrusts his whole self freely to God.' The old narrow intellectual understanding of faith which had dominated catechisms for so long gave way to a biblical understanding of faith by which the whole man, as a free person, submits himself to God. The texts about God's intention to establish a covenant of friendship with man and about man's response to this invitation by authentic faith (*Constitution on Revelation and Scripture*, nn. 2 and 5) are the two conciliar passages I quoted most often in my countless conferences after the Council" (31).

¹⁴⁹ G. Emmett Carter, *The Modern Challenge to Religious Education* (New York: Sadlier, 1961), x-xi. He later became the Cardinal Archbishop of Toronto.

¹⁵⁰ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 92. Erdozain found a direct connection between the kerygmatic movement and the study week at Eichstätt. Referring directly to Jungmann, he states "Though criticized at the time, his ideas have gradually gained ground, to the extent that a quarter of a century later they had become sufficiently developed to be accepted in entirety by the International Study Week at Eichstätt. In fact, right from the start, the key question has to be 'The kerygmatic renewal in catechetics.' Quite remarkable was the convergence of this topic of both preoccupations and interests of the representatives from such a variety of far-flung countries" ("The Evolution of Catechetics," 11).

his responsibility for the world and the betterment of it; 8. leads the Christian to share his faith with others; 9. following God's method, proclaims "the wonderful works of God", which show forth the truth and especially the love contained in them, moving the heart and inspiring the whole of life; 10. embraces a four-fold presentation of the faith: through liturgy, Bible, systematic teaching and the testimony of Christian living; 11. adapts itself to the life and thought of peoples...integrates them harmoniously into a Christian way of life; 12. introduces the catechumen into a living community and helps him to strike root in it¹⁵¹

Mongoven summarized the work of Eichstätt as a blending of the kerygmatic approach and the French catechetical renewal's desire for a catechesis of "signs", which would be the fourfold means of insertion into the mystery of Christ.¹⁵² She stated that the four signs were seen as the content.¹⁵³ Her statement is misleading, and cannot be deduced from Eichstätt's proceedings, or from *Proclamation*. The four means deliver the content, which is ultimately Christ. Hofinger sees these "signs" as necessary if "anyone...is to be properly introduced to the mystery of Christ."¹⁵⁴ "The systematic presentation of the faith has its roots in the creeds and preaching of the early Christian proclamation, and has derived its organic development from the authoritative teaching of the Church throughout the ages."¹⁵⁵ The catechism gives the learner "...spiritual insight into the relationship between faith and Christian life and enables him to cope with the questions of the day as an articulate Christian, and to express the faith to those who enquire about it."¹⁵⁶

Christocentric to Anthropocentric Catechesis

Mongoven wrote, "In accepting the four signs as content and recognizing that catechesis seeks a response of a change of heart, [Eichstätt] it initiated a new search into the nature of the catechetical act."¹⁵⁷ The Bangkok Study Week shifted "from a focus on the content of catechesis to a focus on the persons being catechized."¹⁵⁸ The participants at the Bangkok meeting came to "acknowledge that it is not sufficient to renew the content of catechesis...The fourfold presentation of the message was an essential element in catechesis,

¹⁵¹ Hofinger, ed. *Teaching All Nations* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 394-400.

¹⁵² Mongoven, "The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis," 48.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁵⁴ Hofinger and Buckley, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, 27.

¹⁵⁵ Hofinger, *Teaching All Nations*, 399.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Mongoven, "The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis," 49.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

but this reform alone was not sufficient.”¹⁵⁹ She observed that “catechesis in both non-Christian and Christian countries was to take its beginning from the life-experience and culture of the people who were being catechized.”¹⁶⁰ “The movement toward a subject-centered orientation of catechesis begun at Bangkok and expanded at Katigondo, reached a new climax at Manila.”¹⁶¹

Warren believed that the catechetical renewal did not leap from kerygma to anthropology in two years, but had always been the case.¹⁶² Wrenn, however, identified Bangkok as the pivotal moment of the shift from God to man. “...from supernatural faith to more human concerns; from proclaiming the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and everything that follows from that to espousing a purely human kind of effort featuring a struggling humanity trying to save itself by political means from oppression and injustice.”¹⁶³

The desire of Bangkok to take the person into consideration when catechizing had generally been the desire in the Church. However, the Church stressed God’s initiative and his pedagogy of revelation as the model. The purpose of adaptation is to find the most appropriate method of handing on the deposit so that the person being catechized can come into union with Christ.

Several of the deficiencies reflect a shift to anthropocentric catechesis: insufficient emphasis on God’s initiative in the world, with a corresponding overemphasis on human action; an obscured presentation of the centrality of Christ in salvation history and insufficient emphasis on the divinity of Christ; and, ironically, an inadequate sense of a distinctively Christian anthropology.

Kitigondo returned to the theme of catechesis and liturgy, as *Sacrosanctum concilium* had just been promulgated by the Council. “The documents that emerged from Bangkok and Katigondo weeks were “substantially incorporated into the radically new draft elaborated by

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Warren, *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 26.

¹⁶³ Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 96. An overview of *Lumen Vitae*, published by the Belgian Institute of the same name, from 1960-1980 illustrates this. The articles move from Christocentric and ecclesial themes, to those of liberation theology. This will also be seen in some methodological practices analyzed in Chapter IV.

the mixed committee in charge of preparing for the final text of *Ad Gentes*, especially in Chapters I and II.”¹⁶⁴

At Manila, the participants came to grips with the Council as a whole. It looked at religious plurality, alleging that it based this new approach on the Council. The Council, however, did not promote such an idea. *Ad gentes* asserted that Catholic laity living in “mission” countries

...must give expression to this newness of life in the social and cultural framework of their own homeland, according to their own national traditions. They must be acquainted with this culture; they must heal it and preserve it; they must develop it in accordance with modern conditions, and finally perfect it in Christ, so that the Faith of Christ and the life of the Church are no longer foreign to the society in which they live, but begin to permeate and to transform it. Let them be one with their fellow countrymen in sincere charity, so that there appears in their way of life a new bond of unity and of universal solidarity, which is drawn from the mystery of Christ.¹⁶⁵

Manila stated that “In the past, Christianity meant often a total denial of one’s religious and cultural tradition and a rejection of all that was Buddhist. It is now suggested that all the elements in Buddhism that are good should be maintained even when someone is converted to Jesus Christ.”¹⁶⁶ Manila professed that there is no need to give up loyalty to Confucius or Buddha if one follows the teaching of Jesus, therefore creating a Buddhist-Christian or a Confucian-Christian.¹⁶⁷

Ad Gentes delineates the true nature of inculturation, to see “... in what ways their customs, views on life, and social order, can be reconciled with the manner of living taught by divine revelation...the way will be opened to a more profound adaptation in the whole area of Christian life.”¹⁶⁸ The result: “every appearance of syncretism and of false particularism will be excluded, and Christian life will be accommodated to the genius and the dispositions of each culture. Particular traditions, together with the peculiar patrimony of each family of nations, illumined by the light of the Gospel, can then be taken up into Catholic unity.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Warren, *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 25.

¹⁶⁵ *Ad Gentes*, 21. Ratzinger wrote “As far as theological pluralism is concerned, it is only legitimate to the extent to which the unity of the faith in its objective meaning is safeguarded” (*Donum veritatis*, synthesis).

¹⁶⁶ Warren, *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 59.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ *Ad Gentes*, 21.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 22.

The Manila participants believed it was "...necessary to have a theology of the plurality of religions and of the mission of the Church in this context."¹⁷⁰ The *GCD* acknowledged the difficulty of modern efforts to bring the faith to other cultures.

In times past, the cultural tradition favored the transmission of the faith to a greater extent than it does today; in our times, however, the cultural tradition has undergone considerable change, with the result that less and less can one depend on continued transmission by means of it. Because of this, some renewal in evangelization is needed for transmitting the same faith to new generations.¹⁷¹

It noted "that the Christian faith requires explanations and new forms of expression so that it may take root in all successive cultures. Though the aspirations and basic needs peculiar to human nature and the human condition remain essentially the same, nevertheless, men of our era are posing new questions about the meaning and importance of life."¹⁷² "'Pluralism,' as it is called, is no longer viewed as an evil to be eliminated, but rather as a fact which must be taken into account; anyone can make his own decisions known without becoming or being regarded as alien to society."¹⁷³ The *Directory's* desire for catechetical work in a diverse world calls for caution, sensitivity, and a deep respect for the religious freedom of all people, which was stressed in *The Church in the Modern World, The Declaration on Religious Freedom and Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*.

Therefore, those engaged in the ministry of the word should never forget that faith is a free response to the grace of the revealing God. And to an even greater extent than this was done in the past, they should present the good news of Christ in its remarkable character both as the mysterious key to understanding of the whole human condition and as a free gift of God which is to be received by means of heavenly grace upon admission of one's own insufficiency (cf. GS, 10).¹⁷⁴

"What is the precise relationship between culture and faith? Although this problem was first encountered with Paul's mission...rejoined during the era of Matteo Ricci and the great Jesuit missions...there is still much to be done. One thing is for certain, inculturation cannot diminish the need to proclaim the full content of the gospel in catechesis."¹⁷⁵ Ratzinger wrote, "the plurality of cultures and languages, in itself a benefit, can indirectly bring on misunderstandings which occasion disagreements. In this context, the theologian needs to

¹⁷⁰ Warren, *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 59.

¹⁷¹ *GCD*, 2.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Stuart W. Swetland, "Catechetical Content for Our Culture," Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, *Proceedings from the 15th Annual Convention, Pittsburgh, 1992*, ed. Anthony J. Mastroeni, (Steubenville: Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, 1992), 131.

make a critical, well-considered discernment, as well as have a true mastery of the issues, if he wants to fulfill his ecclesial mission and not lose, by conforming himself to this present world (cf. Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23), the independence of judgment which should be that of the disciples of Christ.”¹⁷⁶

As is often the case, the *GDC* deals directly with issues that had not been addressed or only alluded to in the *GCD*.

'Inculturation' of the faith, whereby in a wonderful exchange are comprised, "all the riches of the nations which have been given to Christ as an inheritance"[*Ad Gentes*] it is a profound and global process and a slow journey. It is not simply an external adaptation designed to make the Christian message more attractive or superficially decorative. On the contrary, it means the penetration of the deepest strata of persons and peoples by the Gospel which touches them deeply, 'going to the very centre and roots' of their cultures.¹⁷⁷

Warren noted the influence of Medellin in setting the pastoral agenda for the meeting of Latin American Bishops, which "...highlighted the need for the church to struggle for liberation in the face of oppression. Eventually this line of thinking emerged in the theology of liberation, which continues at least to some extent, to revise theological method.”¹⁷⁸ This will get further attention in Chapter IV.

After he assisted editing the Medellin documents, Hofinger left the Pan-Asian Institute, desiring to work in Latin America, but based himself in New Orleans, working in the Archdiocesan Religious Education Office. He became a popular speaker at national and diocesan catechetical gatherings. He maintained the collaboration on Sadlier's *On Our Way Series* for several post-conciliar editions. Each edition moved from a Christocentric and ecclesial emphasis prevalent in the first two editions, to an anthropocentric base. Indeed, for many years, even after Hofinger withdrew from its publishing, the Sadlier Series was thought by many to be the epitome of the man-based catechesis.¹⁷⁹ In 1984 Thomas Groome began to write for Sadlier.

¹⁷⁶ *Donum veritatis*, 32.

¹⁷⁷ *GDC*, 109.

¹⁷⁸ Warren, *Source Book for Modern Catechetics*, 25.

¹⁷⁹ From 1976-1980, this author taught in a Religious Education Program in which a Sadlier Series was the required textbook. It was the recommended series from the Diocesan Religious Education Office. While it never really taught anything that was doctrinally or theologically inaccurate, it had almost no doctrinal content at all. It was also skewed in its Christology. Jesus became friend rather than redeemer. Many of the allegorical stories that were used to reach the students "where they were" were actually lost on the children. Parent did complain about the series as well. This phenomenon was addressed earlier in the discussion of the *General*

Kerygmatics and the Documents

Michael Horan's doctoral dissertation undertook an analysis of the parallels between the work of Jungmann and Hofinger and the post-conciliar catechetical documents, which he often denied. The catechetical program of Franciscan University of Steubenville is cognizant of the synthetic harmony between the fullness of the kerygmatic renewal and the magisterial documents. This small University of 2500 students has approximately 225 catechetics majors, the largest number in the US. It also has a large number of graduate students seeking an MA in Theology and Pastoral Ministry with a catechetics specialization. Barbara Morgan¹⁸⁰ founded the program. The students undergo rigorous theological training, and are immersed in the magisterial catechetical documents. They also receive specialized methodological training. In addition, the students are introduced to the kerygmatic approach as described in Hofinger's *Proclamation*. The students are encouraged to see themselves as heralds of the Gospel, and to understand their vocation as catechists. "Anyone who has been appointed and sent to teach religion by ecclesiastical superiors, is, in the last analysis, appointed and sent out by Christ himself; he is, then Our Lord's herald. He can say with St. Paul, 'On behalf of

Catechetical Directory and the American response. In 1982-83, my religious community the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, withdrew from teaching in a Catholic Grade School. After many serious conversations with the pastor who insisted on the adoption of the Series, the sisters gave up the school rather than be forced to teach out of the Sadlier Series. This is an indication of the doctrinal unsoundness of the texts. Several other Religious Communities were forced to do the same thing. Many attempts have been made to locate all the editions of the Sadlier Series in order to present factual rather than anecdotal evidence, to no avail. In a footnote to Wrenn's *Catechisms and Controversies*, he refers to *Our New Catechisms: A Critical Analysis* (New Rochell, N.Y.: Catholic United for the Faith, December 8, 1970) "this booklet analyzed four of the most typical and commonly used of the new religion book textbook series in America using ten doctrinal points identified by the commission of cardinals investigating the Dutch Catechism. The textbook series published by W.H. Sadlier, Inc., Benziger Brothers, Allyn and Bacon, and the Paulist Press were all found to contain some errors, distortions, and omissions on many of these same points" (Wrenn, *Catechisms and Controversies*, 147).

¹⁸⁰ Morgan was a housewife and mother who was involved in parish catechesis as she raised her children. When they were grown she attended summer classes at Notre Dame Institute for enrichment (Kevane had already retired). Her professors noted the depth of her understanding of the nature and purpose of catechesis and encouraged her to seek the MA in Religious Education. Michael Scanlon, TOR and Alan Schreck of Franciscan University of Steubenville became aware of her prowess. In the early 1990's, she began teaching classes in catechetics at Franciscan University, while simultaneously working on her BA in Theology, so that she could then earn the MA from Notre Dame Institute. Scanlon saw the need for catechetical renewal in the United States, and made these concessions. The Catechetics classes are taught within the Theology department to preserve the connection between Theology and Catechetics. It has grown from one professor with a handful of students seeking a concentration in religious education, to a full major in which most of the students have two major areas of study, theology and catechetics, easily done because the catechetics degree requires all but three of the courses required in the theology major. At this writing, there are five faculty members who are engaged in teaching only catechetics classes. Besides the academic qualifications necessary to teach at the university level, these instructors also have extensive experience as practitioners in the field. Graduates of the program teach in many states. Approximately fifteen serve in Diocesan Offices of Religious Education. Many students, priests as well as laity, from other countries have graduated from the program, including those from Mexico, Canada, Belize, Ireland, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, and Japan.

Christ, therefore we are acting as ambassadors; God as it were, appealing through us.' (2 Cor.5:20)"¹⁸¹

The End of the Kerygmatic Renewal

The kerygmatic movement imploded upon itself, but this was not the only reason for its demise. "[Gabriel] Moran's best known study, the dual volume *Theology of Revelation* and *Catechesis of Revelation*, appeared simultaneously with the early waning of *Heilsgeschichte* in the United States and may indeed have been an important contributing factor to its sudden demise."¹⁸²

Moran appears frequently in the catechetical literature of the 60's and 70's. As the Study Weeks were being held, he was engaged in his initial scholarship. Moran attempted to diffuse the influence of kerygmatic catechesis and diminished concern for the deposit of faith in catechesis.

Gabriel Moran

In 1966, McBride wrote, "Real catechesis occurs in an air of freedom, in a posture of invitation. Such openness is essential to religious growth and religious liberty. If you are going to have God's message, you must be sure where to find it. There are four sources of this message: (1) the Bible; (2) Liturgy; (3) Doctrine; (4) Witness."¹⁸³ This was couched in his definition of catechetics.

Catechetics is not scientific theology...catechetics is a theology of recital. It deals not only with God's revelation of himself, but attempts to imitate as closely as possible the mode of self disclosure. God has willed to reveal himself by words and deeds in concrete historical situations. By these words and deeds God formed a Church which would remember what he has said and done and experience the effect his word and action as a salvation event. To each generation of Christians the Church proclaims the words and deeds of God. This is theology of recital or proclamation about God's workings within the course of nature and history. The purpose of this recital is to unveil God's saving power in order to elicit surrender from the listener, a commitment of faith. Contemporary religious language terms this proclamation the 'kerygma.'¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Hofinger and Buckley, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, 247.

¹⁸² Mary C. Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1980), 149.

¹⁸³ Alfred McBride, *Catechetics: A Theology of Proclamation* (Milwaukee, Wis.: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1966), 1.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 147.

Simultaneously Moran was developing opinions that would be in direct opposition to McBride's. Responses to Moran's contributions differ: it was important for only a few years after the Council; it had no affect at all; it had a tremendous impact on religious education, not only in the United States, but in Great Britain as well. Gallagher's "reflections on what I consider to be some important trends and issues in this particular aspect of the Church's pastoral mission", acknowledges the impact of Moran on religious education in both countries.¹⁸⁵

In 1968 Michels reported that a positive current in catechesis was catechesis at the academic level.

Under the able leadership of Gabriel Moran, F.S.C., the graduate program in Catechetical Theology at Manhattan College has developed in the past two years from a part-time program to a full-time program of high academic character. The rationale of the program is Gabriel Moran's thesis that the theological and catechetical questions must be posed together; only through a thoroughly developed theology will principles be found to affect fundamental changes in religious education structures. Questions are consistently situated within the context of a theological anthropology. Gabriel Moran sees psychological and sociological data being worked into the theological framework as the program develops.¹⁸⁶

In 1968 Moran stated, "...I would say that the fundamental problem of catechesis is that it exists."¹⁸⁷ In 1970, he addressed the criticism that *Vision and Tactics* did not address religious education publications. He responded, "After saying that a field should not exist it is difficult to get excited about some of the practical problems of the field."¹⁸⁸ He continued, "From my own point of view, however, I am trying to move forward into the birth of a new field rather than to revivify an old one."¹⁸⁹

In May 2004, Gabriel Moran received the prestigious "Catechetical Award"¹⁹⁰ from the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership.¹⁹¹ The reaction to this award was as polarized as everything else has been in the catechetical field since the Council. Steichen reported:

¹⁸⁵ Jim Gallagher, SDB, *Soil for the Seed* (Great Wakering, Essex: McCrimmon Publishing Co. Ltd., 2001), 84. I can recall his ubiquitous presence when I was a fledgling catechist in the 70's.

¹⁸⁶ Michels, "Currents in Religious Education," 710.

¹⁸⁷ Gabriel Moran, *Vision and Tactics* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 19.

¹⁸⁸ Gabriel Moran, *Design for Religion* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 9.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ His mentor Gerard Sloyan received the Award in 2003.

¹⁹¹ This conference describes itself as a "... Catholic association dedicated to advancing the Church's teaching mission in the United States, especially by promoting excellence in catechetical leaders."

At the banquet where he accepted NCCL's 2004 Catechetical Award, former Christian Brother Gabriel Moran (whom NCCL correctly credits with "reshaping the field of religious education") said turmoil is to be expected after a council, and new building cannot begin until the resistance is cleared away. Moran is near the end of his career, and his wife Maria Harris is now too ill to travel; they do not expect to see the triumph of their lifework. But Moran still thinks triumph will come, despite general recognition by their peers that religious education has been devastated. It seems odd that NCCL chose to present its award to a man who bears so much responsibility for the devastation. It is rather like elevating a horse to the college of cardinals.¹⁹²

Conversely, Baumbach wrote: "I am delighted to offer this reflection about Dr. Gabriel Moran..."¹⁹³ Baumbach was Moran's student at New York University. He writes,

Gabriel could shed new light on topics seemingly spent and restore strength to ideas dangling in mid-air. Thus intellectual expansion was commonplace, and distant horizons somehow became attainable. In addition to exploring varied sacred writings and official documents of our own religious traditions, we read the work of scholars past and present, including the subject of this article.¹⁹⁴

In 1998, Moran and Harris received their first award at the NCCL Convention, given by the William H. Sadlier Publishing Company. In a letter sent to DRE's across the country, the publishers noted:

We are happy to announce that the recipient of this year's F. Sadlier Dinger Award will be Dr. Maria Harris and Dr. Gabriel Moran, who have served the ministry of religious education so diligently and courageously. Their writing, speaking, and teaching have empowered scores of people to explore with renewed vision and commitment their own experience of this vital ministry in the Church. They have created an awareness of Religious Education as a distinct profession in the Church. Their contributions to the field continue to be felt all across the country with their numerous keynote addresses, workshops and other presentations.¹⁹⁵

What contribution has he made to catechetics? "He is widely credited with reshaping the field of religious education in the United States, and to have had a significant effect in many other countries."¹⁹⁶ In *Vision and Tactics* he wrote, "There cannot be solid and permanent advances in the teaching of religion without a thorough theological understanding of what catechetics is about."¹⁹⁷ He complained, "What many people writing in catechesis do not

¹⁹² Catholic World News, July 2004.

¹⁹³ Gerard Baumbach, "Gabriel Moran: A Reflection on a Scholarly Artist of Religious Education," *Catechist*, Peter Li Inc., March 2004. Baumbach serves as Director of the Center for Catechetical Initiatives at the Institute for Church Life and Concurrent Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Sadlier website. Baumbach himself was a recipient of this award in 2003.

¹⁹⁶ Moran's biography, New York University website, <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/gmoran/GMCMV.htm>.

¹⁹⁷ Moran, *Vision and Tactics*, 39.

seem to grasp is that theology has been in a process of renewal similar to catechetics-only more so.”¹⁹⁸ Moran thought that catechesis was anti-theological because it tried to solve its problems through scripture and liturgy, alluding to the kerygmatic approach. “That day is now passed. It is theology that will make or break any catechetical movement.”¹⁹⁹ While the GCD stated, “the catechetical renewal ought to use the help which can be given by the sacred sciences, theology...,”²⁰⁰ it also highlighted the assistance provided by “...bible studies, pastoral thought, and the human sciences, and also the instruments by which ideas and opinions are spread, especially the social communications media.”²⁰¹

Moran was a Christian Brother. In collaboration with Sister of St. Joseph Maria Harris he wrote *Experiences in Community, Should Religious Life Survive?* in 1968.²⁰² He wrote *The New Community* in 1970.²⁰³ He often appears as a protagonist in works tracing the crisis in religious life since Vatican II.²⁰⁴ Lay people, just beginning to take positions in catechetical leadership in the late 60’s, looked to religious for leadership and guidance.

Moran was born in 1935. He joined the Christian Brothers, whose main apostolate is education, taught in the congregation’s schools, and then went on to study philosophy and

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ GCD, 9.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Gabriel Moran and Maria Harris, *Experiences in Community, Should Religious life Survive?* (New York: herder and Herder, 1968).

²⁰³ Gabriel Moran, *The New Community* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970). In *Experiences in Community*, he states, “In the immediate future, religious life can undoubtedly survive. The question worth asking is whether it should”(12). “In the area of religious life, the Council has left the future open to those who now bear the responsibility of creating something new. To go beyond the Council is not only a right but a duty” (15). Thousands of religious left their communities after the Council, including Moran and Harris, who eventually married each other.

Experiences in Community was reviewed in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. “In spite of the multiple writings currently devoted to the subject of religious life in the Catholic Church, there seems always to be room for one more. This is especially true when one of the authors (as in this instance) enjoys a renown such as that ascribed to Gabriel Moran.” The reviewer, a religious, is disappointed in Moran however. “What we have here is not so much a stimulus to creative thinking, as might have been hoped, to awaken those who ought to be concerned about the direction religious life will or will not take in the future, but rather a climate of confusion resulting from the presentation of divergent opinions, representative of several positions whose arguments are offered as self-evident, often without being so.” Later she remarks that the book “constitutes a unique anthology of truisms and ‘quotable quotes’” but that it “becomes a vehicle for thought-provoking statements that, unfortunately, end where they have begun through lack of an inner dynamism to carry them forward” (Agnes Cunningham, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 7 [1970]: 379). Sr. Agnes Cunningham, SSCC, served as professor of patristic and historical theology at Mundelein Seminary, Chicago from 1967-1992. From 1985, she also served as the theological consultant for the *Christ Our Life Series* published by Loyola Press, Chicago, IL.

²⁰⁴ Ann Carey, *Sisters in Crisis: The Tragic Unraveling of Women’s Religious Communities* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1997); John Fialka, *Sisters: Catholic Nuns and the Making of America* (St. Martin’s Press,

theology at Catholic University of America. He became the protégé of Rev. Gerard Sloyan, Chair of the Department of Religious Education. “Because of his position in the 1960’s at the Catholic University of America, Gerard Sloyan has a special place in the bridge between pre-conciliar and post-conciliar eras. Through his direction of the Department of Religious Education, he proved a distinctive spirit to a generation of religious educators.”²⁰⁵

Sloyan directed Moran’s doctoral dissertation. “Thirty-four years ago I wrote my first term-paper in graduate school on the topic of revelation. The paper developed into a MA thesis and then a dissertation that was published as two books.”²⁰⁶ It was entitled “Contemporary Theology of Revelation and its Effects upon Catechetical Theory.” It was published in 1966 as *Theology of Revelation and Catechesis of Revelation*.²⁰⁷ He spent the remainder of his life in higher education.²⁰⁸

Vision and Tactics followed in 1968, *Design for Religion* in 1971 and *The Present Revelation* in 1972. Moran remained prolific, writing several books that moved from revelation to religious education to education. In 2002, he returned to the theme of revelation, writing *Both Sides: The Story of Revelation*, it asks the question, “Can anything new be said about revelation?”²⁰⁹ In 2007 Moran published *Fashioning a People Today: The Educational Insights of Maria Harris*.²¹⁰

2003); Michael J. Witt, FSC, *I. Phil: The Journey of a Twentieth-Century Religious* (Winona, Minn.: St. Mary’s Press, 1987).

²⁰⁵ Gabriel Moran, “Religious Education after Vatican II”, in *Open Catholicism The Tradition at its Best*, Essays in honor of Gerard S. Sloyan, David Efroymson and John Raines, eds. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997, 152.

²⁰⁶ Gabriel Moran, “Revelation in a Culture of Disbelief,” *Religious Education 2* (1997): 149.

²⁰⁷ This was published in the United Kingdom under the title *God Still Speaks, The Basis of Christian Education* (London: Burns and Oats, London, 1966).

²⁰⁸ After receiving his Ph.D. he served as associate professor of theology and catechetics in the Master’s Program at the Christian Brothers’ Manhattan College in New York. At the age of 35 he was made Visitor (the equivalent of provincial superior) of the Christian Brothers’ LINE – Long Island/New England region. He served on the faculties of the New York Theological Seminary, Fairfield University, Boston College and finally New York University (NYU), where he remains as a professor in the department of Humanities and the Social Sciences. He was director of the doctoral program in religious education and taught courses in the philosophy and the history of education. He collaborated with his wife Maria Harris on several projects, including *Reshaping Religious Education – Conversations on Contemporary Practice*, published in 1998.

²⁰⁹ Gabriel Moran, *Both Sides: The Story of Revelation*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 3.

²¹⁰ Gabriel Moran, *Fashioning a People Today: The Education Insights of Maria Harris*, (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007). This book is not included in this study because of its publication after the final draft of the dissertation was given to my director, and because it speaks mainly about the work of Maria Harris. It was reviewed by Maureen Shaunessy, SC in *Catechetical Leader*, A Publication of the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership. She calls Moran a “leading figure in religious education for over forty years.” And states “His description of the hierarchy as a sacred order of circles within circles also gives rise to new insights about roles and functions in the institutional church which are inclusive and comprehensive.” “Books in the News”, *Catechetical Leader*, Volume 18 Number 3, 2007, 19.

His Work

Moran's body of work is challenging. "In his first period he could be described as a theologian-catechist...In his second period Moran could be described as an ecumenical educationist. Here, 'theology' is replaced by 'religion,' catechetics is replaced by education...Moran's third period is less easy to categorize. Possibly this is due to the fact that its full richness is still being discovered."²¹¹ Devitt opined that it could be called his adult education phase, religious education phase, or his theoretical phase, but settles on "aesthetic phase."²¹²

Christian Brother José María Pérez Navarro noted, "Moran was a polemical writer, very controversial in his day because of the novelty of his ideas. His work is quite complex."²¹³ Pérez Navarro focused on Moran's understanding of revelation: "...he noted the decline in religious education and arrived at the conclusion the catechism is dead. The reason for this was that catechists were operating with a false concept of Revelation."²¹⁴ Moran would attempt to rectify this.

Shortly after Ratzinger was elected Pope, Moran wrote, "The key to Ratzinger's writings is the claim - or unquestioned assumption - that there exists a thing called 'Christian revelation.' This object is the standard by which every opinion and practice can be judged with certainty."²¹⁵

Perez Navarro commented further,

Following the general direction of contemporary European phenomenology, Moran holds that revelation is essentially "a personal union in knowledge between God and a participating subject in the revelational history of a community" (p. 93). Putting the accent on personal encounter, he tends toward a somewhat actualistic position, and evaluates the historical and doctrinal aspects of revelation almost entirely in terms of their power to contribute to a present existential communion with God. Having

²¹¹ Patrick M. Devitt, *How Adult is Adult Religious Education? Gabriel Moran's Contribution to Adult Religious Education* (Dublin: Veritas, 1991), 44.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 44-45.

²¹³ Jose Maria Perez Navarro, FSC, "The Teaching of the Catechism in Lasallian History," (doctoral dissertation, Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, 2001), 28.

<http://www.lasalle2.org/English/Resources/Publications/PDF/Education/Cahier17.pdf>

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Gabriel Moran, "Deeply Conservative," *The Alternative* 32 (2005).

reached its unsurpassable fullness in the consciousness of the risen Christ, revelation continues to be given in the history of the church and of the world.²¹⁶

Moran's interest in revelation has a sub-element: an analysis of biblical or kerygmatic catechesis. "Moran's observations on making catechesis relevant to the contemporary American adolescent offer a clear and forceful challenge to the prevalent biblical-kerygmatic approach."²¹⁷ In doing so, he became a proponent of experience in religious education. This issue became contentious in the years following the Council and remains so today.

Moran's work also focused on the desire for adult religious education, as did the GCD. "They should also remember that catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis."²¹⁸

This analysis focuses only on Moran's influence on the theology of revelation, the kerygmatic renewal, and assent.²¹⁹ In 1979, Pennock wrote, "A review of the literature indicates that no one has yet attempted systematically to trace the development of Gabriel Moran's theological vision and apply it to the field of catechetics."²²⁰ In addition to Pennock, Anne Marie Mongoven, Mary Boys, Gloria Durka and Maria Harris focused all or part of their dissertations on Moran, though their accounts of his work were generally uncritical.²²¹ They all became well known in catechetics. Moran is frequently mentioned in texts tracing the history of catechesis. These are polarized in their appreciation of his contribution to catechesis.

²¹⁶ Perez Navarro, "The Teaching of the Catechism in Lasallian History," 28.

²¹⁷ Avery Dulles, "Revelation in Recent Catholic Theology," *Theology Today* 24, no.3 (1967): 364.

²¹⁸ GCD 20.

²¹⁹ Thousands of active catechists were not snatching up Moran's books, applying his tenets to their lesson plans. Nonetheless catechist Marie Kuffel, from Missoula, Montana, wrote an account of the renewed program in her parish CCD program, entitled "Applying Gabriel Moran's Vision." Without citing anything specific from Moran's writing, she states, "little did anyone realize that a new approach to religious education in our parish was beginning to evolve – that Gabriel Moran's vision had been grasped by our grassroots tacticians." *Living Light*, Volume 16 [1969]: 135. Moran observed that he approached catechesis as a theologian, but "It is constantly demanded of me that I explain how to teach religion to little children. My reply is that I do not know and have never claimed that I did." (Moran, *Vision and Tactics*, 10).

²²⁰ Michael Francis Pennock, "The development of the Religious Educational Thought of Gabriel Moran: Theological Vision and Catechetical Implications" (Ph. D. diss., University of Akron, 1980), 5.

²²¹ Michael James Poutney studied the work of Moran for his master's thesis at McGill University. He looks at Moran's middle body of work, in the 1980's, including *Interplay: A Theory of Religious Education* (Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1981); *Religious Education Development* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1988); and *Religious Education as a Second Language* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1989). He summarized Moran's contribution to the field of religious education by listing his proposals: That religious education can be: 1. seen as a definite field of study; 2. approached and understood through the concept of development; 3. likened to the acquisition of a second language; 4. be taught as an academic construct.

As Vatican II was debating the nature of revelation, Moran wrote *Scripture and Tradition* (1963). Reviewer John L. Murphy wrote, "His chief aim is to show that there has been a misunderstanding in certain areas concerning what the different theologians intend to say; the equivocation associated with some of the key words and phrases has contributed to the confusion and made a meeting of the minds more difficult."²²² George Tavard, a peritus at the Council, wrote the foreword. He felt Moran's contribution to the theological conversations and debate concerning revelation was as a "peacemaker and it will serve to soften the sharp angles of controversy."²²³ He wrote, "Brother Gabriel has understood his task as consisting, first, in the objective presentation of evidence as it is explained in a number of works in varying length, depth and scope, and second, in an estimate of how near the positions really are to each other."²²⁴

Moran remarked at the beginning,

...that revelation is never really an object which can be divided, contained, or put into categories. The loving invitation of the merciful God revealed in Christ can only be proclaimed to man by the Church and answered by man in faith. If in studying the present question I am forced to use language which tends to objectify that revelation, it should be obvious that the reification of God's word is never intended.²²⁵

He concluded, "The debate we have studied in this book indicates that the time may be close at hand for the Church to further clarify this doctrine. We confidently look forward to the time when the Church will add to Trent's declaration and will state the Catholic doctrine on this in terms best suited to our own day."²²⁶

Much of the text demonstrated his respect for the teaching of the Church and her doctrine. At the same time he desired clarity. Pennock remarked, "This first piece of scholarship for Moran was really a survey of the literature on this intramural (both Catholic and Protestant) debate on the proper role of scripture and tradition."²²⁷ "His goal in this book was to examine the question of whether the contents of these two sources of revelation, namely

²²² Murphy, John L., Book Review, *Scripture and Tradition*, Theological Studies, Vol. 25, 1964. 87-88.

²²³ Gabriel Moran, *Scripture and Tradition* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 9.

²²⁴ Ibid., 8.

²²⁵ Ibid., 9.

²²⁶ Ibid., 86.

²²⁷ Pennock, "The Development of the Religious Educational Thought of Gabriel Moran," 71.

scripture and tradition, exclude each other, partially overlap, or are identical.”²²⁸ If there was a constitutive tradition, he asked “whether or not Scripture ‘contains’ all revealed truth either explicitly or implicitly.”²²⁹ The Council asked the same question. It responded by affirming that there is another reality from which the Church receives her doctrine – tradition.

“Consequently it is not from sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.”²³⁰ Pennock praised Moran for his attempts to treat the topic fairly.

Pennock synthesized Moran’s position in *Scripture and Tradition*.²³¹ Moran concerns himself with how revelation is transmitted, not its nature. Transmission, through tradition or scripture cannot be discussed apart from a community; he situates the sources within a present community. Secondly, he does not go outside the Christian theology of revelation. Thirdly, he argues against constitutive tradition, thus rejecting Trent’s two source theory of revelation. He had become ecumenical, although he rejected *Sola Scriptura*. Finally, he is concerned with the meaning of given terms that he suggests are inadequate. Pennock believed that this assessment is prescient of his later body of work. Indeed, community, ecumenism, and a redefinition of terms in order to discuss theological and catechetical tenets figure predominantly.

Moran made little or no reference to *DF*, which, as Boys summarized “reiterated and refined traditional church teaching on reason, revelation, and faith. In affirming the knowability of God’s existence by natural reason, the reasonableness of the assent of faith, and the complementary yet distinct roles of faith and reason, the constitution reflected its scholastic influence.”²³²

His research tends toward contemporaries only. He rarely looks to the Councils, the Fathers of the Church,²³³ or the Scholastics whom Jungmann held in great regard.²³⁴ Moran rarely

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Moran, *Scripture and Tradition*, 17.

²³⁰ *DV*, 9.

²³¹ Pennock, “The Development of the Religious Educational Thought of Gabriel Moran,” 79-81.

²³² Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 69.

²³³ “Today, there are many theological concepts or tendencies which, contrary to the indications of Decree, *Optatam Totius*, pay little attention to the Fathers’ witness and, in general, to the ecclesial Tradition, and confine themselves to the direct confrontation of biblical texts with social reality and life’s concrete problems with the help of the human sciences.” The document continues, “These are theological currents which do

referred to Church history at all, except negatively.²³⁵ This is a characteristic that leaves Moran on the fringes of academic research within Catholic theology.

Gerard Sloyan

Ambrose wrote,

Accordingly, I think that it is well to warn studious and able young men, who fear God and are seeking for happiness of life, not to venture heedlessly upon the pursuit of the branches of learning that are in vogue beyond the pale of the Church of Christ, as if these could secure for them the happiness they seek; but soberly and carefully to discriminate among them.²³⁶

Rev. Gerard Sloyan has been cited often in this paper. He wrote the introduction to *Theology of Revelation*. In a series of articles entitled "Retrospective on the Revolution," Paul Likoudis stated that catechesis was perhaps "fatally subverted by a relatively small circle of self-proclaimed experts, the most prominent of whom have been...ex-Brother Gabriel Moran, Fr. Gerard Sloyan, Fr. Richard McBrien, et al..."²³⁷

Sloyan taught religious education at CUA from 1956 to 1967, and served as department chair. He left Catholic University in 1967, and served at Temple University from 1967 to 1990.²³⁸

without the historical dimension of dogmas, and for the immense efforts of the patristic era and of the Middle age do not seem to have any real importance. In such cases, study of the Fathers is reduced to a minimum, practically caught up in an overall rejection of the past" (Congregation for Catholic Education, *Instruction on the study of the Fathers of the Church in the Formation of Priests*, November 10, 1989 [L'Osservatore Romano, 15 January 1990]).

²³⁴ While written for the formation of men in seminaries, *Optatam Totius* (Vatican II's Decree on Priestly Training) states that "in order that they may illumine the mysteries of salvation as completely as possible, the students should learn to penetrate them more deeply with the help of speculation, under the guidance of St. Thomas, and to perceive their interconnections" (16).

²³⁵ Earlier in the chapter, the GCD's concern for a proper ecclesiology stated that "reference to Sacred Scripture is virtually exclusive and unaccompanied by sufficient reference to the Church's long experience and reflection, acquired in the course of her two-thousand-year history. The ecclesial nature of catechesis, in this case, appears less clearly; the inter-relation of Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium, each according to "its proper mode" does not yet harmoniously enrich a catechetical transmission of the faith;

²³⁶ "To Which of the Above mentioned Studies Attention Should be Given and in What Spirit?" Exposition on the Christian Faith, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3404.htm>

²³⁷ Likoudis, "Bishop Raymond Lucker: A Tragic Figure of the 'New Catechetics.'"

²³⁸ While at Temple University, Sloyan, with colleague Leonard Swidler, organized a petition to support theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, OP, whose work was being investigated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. 120 American Theologians signed the petition. Former Jesuit priest Peter Hebblethwaite records this in *The New Inquisition?*, his study of the events surrounding CDF's investigation of Schillebeeckx and Hans Küng. He notes that the Americans inserted a new point into the argument over the parameters of theological research in the Church. "First, they interpreted the Schillebeeckx case as the harbinger of 'a general Vatican backlash against creative Catholic theology'; and, second, they expressed the hope that a 'public counter-move against secretive, restrictive, condemnatory procedures of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith' would 'direct it into more open, dialogic kind of structures'" ([London: Fount Paperbacks, 1980], 24). Schillebeeckx was not silenced, although he continued to receive "notifications" from the Vatican regarding the orthodoxy of his writing.

At this writing, he serves as Distinguished Lecturer at CUA. In 1968 he joined Charles Curran in his formal protest of *Humanae Vitae*. Moran joined them. He was a founding member of the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church in 1980. Steichen believed, “It may be impossible to name one person as most responsible for the current state of religious instruction in the United States. But no one has a stronger claim than Father Gerard Sloyan...[who]reorganized the entire curriculum, and thus changed the key religious attitudes of a key cohort of religion teachers.”²³⁹ Sloyan hired Curran in 1964 and was Kevane’s colleague.

In his introduction to *TR*,²⁴⁰ Sloyan wrote, “Particularly, one welcomes the serious attention given to a theology of revelation in the context of religious education. Theology is a sterile science unless its expectations and conclusions become the possession of the common man.”²⁴¹

Revelation

Moran clarified that revelation was not a thing, nor a book, nor something to be memorized. The questions raised in *ST* are expanded and answered in *TR*.²⁴² “What I am concerned within this work however is neither with the whole of Catholic theology nor the apologetics section of theology. My interest is in the essence or nature of divine revelation.”²⁴³

He sporadically referenced Vatican II and Latourelle. Moran writes, “I cannot pretend to offer a final synthesis on revelation.”²⁴⁴ His goal: “I would like, nevertheless, to consider some points that I believe are most crucial for the development of a scientific theology of

²³⁹ Donna Steichen, “Can Reform Come?” *The Catholic World Report*, Ignatius Press, May 1998, cf. www.CatholicCulture.org.

²⁴⁰ The people chosen to write the introductions to Moran’s earlier works deserve attention: George Tavard, Gerard Sloyan, Charles Davis, Hubert Richards and Peter DeRosa were all priests at the time. Sloyan and Tavard remained so. Davis left the Church entirely. Richards and DeRosa taught at Corpus Christi College, controversial for its liberal approach to catechesis, and finally shut down by its founding bishop.

²⁴¹ Gerard Sloyan, “Introduction,” in Gabriel Moran, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).

²⁴² The preface to *Theology of Revelation* was written by English theologian Charles Davis. In 1966, Davis left the Catholic priesthood and the Church itself. In a eulogy written for the *National Catholic Reporter* (Feb.12, 1999), Rosemary Radford Ruether wrote, “The reason was a conviction that the manner in which the magisterium claimed a monopoly on truth was fundamentally false, unsubstantiated biblically and historically, and stifled the search for truth and the formation of communities of love and justice...For himself, Davis was saying, Roman Catholicism as an institutional structure was a ‘zone of untruth.’ The only way he could function as a Christian theologian was to repudiate these institutional claims through formal disaffiliation.”

²⁴³ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 18.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 19.

revelation and of a pastorally relevant understanding of revelation.”²⁴⁵ Moran demonstrates a deep concern for the correlation between theology and catechesis. He reiterates, “The questions raised within this part of theology are so fundamental to Catholic faith that they cannot fail to have profound effects upon preaching and catechizing.”²⁴⁶ These goals correspond to what the Council wrote of itself, and what *CT* would say of the relationship between theology and catechesis.

In an article discussing the work of Archbishop Buechlein and the “deficiencies” Sean Innerst called attention to Moran’s work,

These popular works represented not only the first steps toward a rejection of any objective content to revelation, but also a reduction of the received virtue of faith to a personal “experience.” In point of fact, the logic of Moran’s position led him to repudiate catechesis altogether, finally declaring, ‘the problem of catechetics is that it exists.’

One would expect that a denial of the objective character of revelation would immediately invite a correction from the Church’s official teachers as a clear assault on all doctrine. Such corrections did come but, despite these, Moran’s revolutionary ideas caught on, much to his own surprise. As a consequence, the whole of the catechetical enterprise has been recast over the last twenty-five or so years according to a methodology which takes as its first principle that each individual’s experience of God is paramount.²⁴⁷

Moran saw Vatican II as “approving and bringing to definite formulation these theological developments concerning revelation...the work of Vatican II, as that of the councils before it, can also be understood as the beginning of further theological reflection.”²⁴⁸ He asserted, “Because revelation is so basic to the Christian religion it is more than a little likely that the Church has already understood much about the nature of revelation at the level of practice which is only now being thematized for theological inquiry.”²⁴⁹ He spoke of the relationship between revelation and faith, which was stressed in catechetical documents. He believed “that there is far more to be said about faith and revelation than what the First Vatican Council chose to say.”²⁵⁰ He addressed the “believing that” aspect of faith, which he

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Sean Innerst, *Catholic Dossier*, Ignatius Press, November 1997. At the time of the article, Innerst was the Diocesan Director of Religious Education, Rapid City, South Dakota.

²⁴⁸ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 18.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 28.

believes Vatican I stressed, along with the “objective side of revelation.”²⁵¹ He takes no note, as the scholastics did, of the traditional distinction between *fides qua creditur* - the faith by which it is believed; and *fides quae creditur* - the faith which is believed, that is the content of the faith.²⁵²

Ongoing Revelation

Moran was convinced that revelation is ongoing, acknowledging that it was “constantly asserted in Catholic writing, usually with little development or explanation, that revelation is closed, ceased, or ended with the Apostles.”²⁵³ *DV* declared, “The Christian dispensation, therefore, as the new and definitive covenant, will never pass away and we now await no further new public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Tim. 6:14 and Tit. 2:13).”²⁵⁴ This is because Christ is the fullness of revelation. “Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.”²⁵⁵ *DV* states “...there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been made by believers....For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.”²⁵⁶

Moran disregards this notion and opined, “It is therefore at least possible to raise the question of how revelation has ‘closed’ in one (objective) sense and yet in some other sense continues to occur.”²⁵⁷ What he meant is unclear. He continued, “Indeed, I hope in the course of this

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Aiden Nichols, OP offers a summary of these distinctions in *The Shape of Catholic Theology*: “there is also what the medievals called the *fides qua*, the faith by which I turn to God in Christ by the Spirit through my acceptance of what the Church believes. If the *fides quae* is objective faith, then the *fides qua* is the subjective faith, not in the sense of partial, individual opinions about faith, but the faith that pertains to me as an acting subject in my own right. As described by St. Thomas Aquinas in his theologian's primer, the *Summa theologiae* (IIa. IIae. 1-7), subjective faith opens the mind to God's own truth, enabling objective faith to become the medium of direct contact with God himself. The light which the *fides qua* brings to the mind derives from God's radiant being and enables us to share here and now in the knowledge which the saints enjoy in heaven and which, more fundamentally, God has of himself” (*The Shape of Catholic Theology: An Introduction to Its Sources, Principles, and History* [Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991], 16-17).

²⁵³ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 28.

²⁵⁴ *DV*, 4.

²⁵⁵ CCC, 66.

²⁵⁶ *DV*, 8.

²⁵⁷ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 28.

work to show that revelation may be viewed as a process which only *begins* in its fullness with apostolic times, a process now extending to all history and never to cease.”²⁵⁸

Bouyer explains,

In one sense, in Christ, who is supreme, "everything is already accomplished," for Christ "recapitulates" in himself the whole of sacred history which led to him, and as the Second Adam he not only carries the seed of the eschatological fulfillment of the whole of human and cosmic history but--as the Last Adam as well--incorporates himself into that history. Thus we must maintain that everything--absolutely everything--of what was to be revealed to us was done, once and for all, in Christ--in what he said, what he did, and what he remains in the glory of his resurrection.²⁵⁹

In reference to history, Moran commented, "Catholic doctrine...with its insistence upon the closing of revelation, seems to be committed to the past over the present and exposed to the charge of not taking history seriously."²⁶⁰ On the contrary, the *GCD* stated "...the message should always show clearly the deep and intimate harmony that exists between God's salvific plan, fulfilled in Christ the Lord, and human aspirations, between the history of salvation and human history, between the Church, the People of God, and human communities, between God's revelatory action and man's experience, between supernatural gifts and charisms and human values."²⁶¹ The *GDC* would add, "The disciple of Jesus Christ deeply shares the 'joys and hopes, the sadness and the anxieties of the men today. He gazes upon human history and participates in it, not only from the standpoint of reason but also from that of faith.'" ²⁶²

Moran defended his position by referencing the kerygmatic approach, "Catholic writers who hope to overcome the abstractness of faith by introducing historical events as the basis of God's revelation must realize however, that past events *are* abstractions and conceptualizations."²⁶³ Bouyer explained,

Revelation was completed by being fully received from Christ in the Church and, for the first time, transmitted by her. In the preaching of the apostles, the light of the resurrection illuminates their own testimony--for the witnesses themselves, under the special influence of the Spirit of the risen Christ. Thus the faith of the Church will ever be a living echo, called forth by the faith of the apostles.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Louis Bouyer, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 344.

²⁶⁰ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 54.

²⁶¹ *GCD*, 8

²⁶² *GDC*, 18.

²⁶³ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 54.

²⁶⁴ Bouyer, *Church of God*, 352.

Modernism

Modernism was a 19th century phenomenon that reached its zenith at the turn of the 20th Century. It is complex and controversial. Pius X called it the “synthesis of all heresies”²⁶⁵ and sought to rout it out.

That We make no delay in this matter is rendered necessary especially by the fact that the partisans of error are to be sought not only among the Church's open enemies; they lie hid, a thing to be deeply deplored and feared, in her very bosom and heart, and are the more mischievous, the less conspicuously they appear.²⁶⁶

He described Modernistic thinkers:

First of all they lay down the general principle that in a living religion everything is subject to change, and must in fact be changed. In this way they pass to what is practically their principal doctrine, namely, evolution. To the laws of evolution everything is subject under penalty of death--dogma, Church, worship, the Books we revere as sacred, even faith itself.²⁶⁷

Moran referenced Latourelle, “...modernism ‘aimed to replace the notions of supernatural revelation and immutable dogma with a religious development for which the individual or collective consciousness is the sole norm.’”²⁶⁸ He asserted, “Care must be exercised, however, lest one condemn all the teachings of modernists as false or condemn all modernistic sounding teaching of the present as heretical. What is decisive here is not the isolated statement but the general theological context and the theological suppositions.”²⁶⁹ In this mindset he concluded that revelation is not closed. The *Syllabus of Errors* compiled at the direction of Pius X condemned and proscribed the theory that, “Revelation, constituting the object of the Catholic faith, was not completed with the Apostles.”²⁷⁰

Christ as the Recipient of Revelation

To reconfigure revelation, Moran had to reconfigure Christ. He perceived Christ as the recipient of revelation, and the consciousness of the risen Christ is key to revelation. He worked from a low Christology that overemphasizes the humanity of Christ. This did not reflect the teaching of the Council. Bouyer’s explanation of revelation is placed within the context of the two natures of Christ.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, 1.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 26.

²⁶⁸ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 30. Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, 312.

²⁶⁹ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 29

²⁷⁰ *Syllabus of Errors*, 21.

It may be said that the source of Gospel revelation (its initial and unique source) is the ineffable vision of God, man, and the world that was formed in Christ's human soul. This source burst forth for us--for the Church, properly speaking--in Christ's expression of this interior experience by his words and acts, mutually clarifying one another, just as in the Old Covenant the Divine Word was expressed inseparably in events and in their inspired interpretation.²⁷¹

No one can determine fully what Christ's consciousness was. Theologians have speculated about it for centuries. The *Catechism* explained:

This human soul that the Son of God assumed is endowed with a true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space and time. This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, "increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man, "and would even have to inquire for himself about what one in the human condition can learn only from experience. This corresponded to the reality of his voluntary emptying of himself, taking "the form of a slave."²⁷²

Regarding Christ's divine knowledge, the *Catechism* continues:

But at the same time, this truly human knowledge of God's Son expressed the divine life of his person. "The human nature of God's Son, *not by itself but by its union with the Word*, knew and showed forth in itself everything that pertains to God." Such is first of all the case with the intimate and immediate knowledge that the Son of God made man has of his Father. The Son in his human knowledge also showed the divine penetration he had into the secret thoughts of human hearts.²⁷³

Rudolph Bandas explained Christ's knowledge as God and man: "Christ possessed the beatific and infused knowledge in their full perfection from the first moment of the creation of His soul, and successively revealed to men the treasures of wisdom hidden within him."²⁷⁴ This reflects the thinking of Thomas Aquinas.

There is a twofold advancement in knowledge: one in essence, inasmuch as the habit of knowledge is increased; the other in effect - e.g. if someone were with one and the same habit of knowledge to prove to someone else some minor truths at first, and afterwards greater and more subtle conclusions. Now in this second way it is plain that Christ advanced in knowledge and grace, even as in age, since as His age increased He wrought greater deeds, and showed greater knowledge and grace.

²⁷¹ Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 344

²⁷² CCC, 472.

²⁷³ CCC, 473.

²⁷⁴ Rudolph Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization for the use of Lay Teachers of Religion, Sisters, Seminarians and Priests* (St. Paul, Minn.: The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine of the Archdiocese of St. Paul, 1957), 127.

But as regards the habit of knowledge, it is plain that His habit of infused knowledge did not increase, since from the beginning He had perfect infused knowledge of all things; and still less could His beatific knowledge increase.²⁷⁵

Aquinas concludes (citing Albert the Great, Alexander of Hales, and Bonaventure): "...no knowledge in Christ increased in essence, but merely by experience...And in this way they maintain that Christ's knowledge grew in experience, e.g. by comparing the infused intelligible species with what He received through the senses for the first time."²⁷⁶

It seems as if Moran was seeking another revelation of revelation itself. In this way, he can reconfigure God, the Father, the Son, the work of the Spirit, and the Church. In short, the hierarchy of truths can be reconfigured, which then would have a detrimental effect upon the very content of catechesis itself – and thus the deficiencies.

Revelation and Theology

According to Vatican II, theology relies on revelation as guarded and handed on by the Magisterium.

But when either the Roman Pontiff or the Body of Bishops together with him defines a judgment, they pronounce it in accordance with Revelation itself, which all are obliged to abide by and be in conformity with, that is, the Revelation which as written or orally handed down is transmitted in its entirety through the legitimate succession of bishops and especially in care of the Roman Pontiff himself, and which under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth is religiously preserved and faithfully expounded in the Church.²⁷⁷

"In fact the teaching of the Magisterium, by virtue of divine assistance, has a validity beyond the argumentation it employs. As far as theological pluralism is concerned, it is only legitimate to the extent to which the unity of the faith in its objective meaning is safeguarded."²⁷⁸

Ratzinger defined the role of the theologian:

...to pursue in a particular way an ever deeper understanding of the Word of God found in the inspired Scriptures and handed on by the living Tradition of the Church. He does this in communion with the Magisterium which has been charged with the responsibility of preserving the deposit of faith.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Question 12, Article 2, "Whether Christ advanced in acquired or empiric knowledge?"

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ LG, 25.

²⁷⁸ *Evangelium vitae*, Synthesis.

²⁷⁹ *Donum veritatis*, 6.

John Paul insisted “theologians and exegetes have a duty to take great care that people do not take for a certainty what on the contrary belongs to the area of questions of opinion or of discussion among experts.”²⁸⁰ In nine years, from *ST* to *TPR*, Moran made an extraordinary theological journey. In the end, he determined that there was no revelation. “Gabriel Moran has repeatedly returned to the theme of revelation as present, but his thought on the subject is by no means easy to follow. Revelation exists today, he contends, as a present event, for a ‘happening is a happening only when it is happening.’”²⁸¹ “In *The Present Revelation* he puts the matter very starkly: ‘Admonitions to keep a balance among past, present and future make no sense. One must choose from the beginning: either the present is everything or it is nothing’ (p. 125).”²⁸² In *TPR* Moran stated, “Throughout this book I have been trying to strike a death blow at this conception of revelation as indubitable, universal, and immutable truths. The purpose of doing this is not to destroy the Christian religion but to recover whatever of it is salvageable from its modern rationalistic form.”²⁸³

The movement to his position in *TPR* is dramatic. In *TR* and *CR*, he considered revelation as relational, needing an audience for it to take place. Revelation was not locked into salvation history but was on-going, into the human experience of the community. Christ’s position in this interaction was seen earlier.

The next movement occurs in *Design for Religion*. “Moran now spoke of three developmental stages: (1) the ‘primitive religious’ stage in which ‘religion has a revelation’; (2) the narrow ‘Christian stage’ in which one spoke of a specifically ‘Christian revelation’; and (3) the stage of ‘ecumenical religion/Christianity’ in which the words ‘revealed truths’ and ‘Christian revelation’ no longer made any sense.”²⁸⁴

Boys considered him one of the foremost revisionists of catechesis, a dissenting voice to the plan of the *NCD*. In *Education toward Adulthood*, Moran wrote, “The professional

²⁸⁰ *CT*, 60.

²⁸¹ “The God of Revelation,” in D. Callahan (ed.) *God, Jesus, Spirit* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 7, quoted by Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 105.

²⁸² Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 105, citing Moran, *The Present Revelation*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972): 125.

²⁸³ Gabriel Moran, *The Present Revelation*, 315.

²⁸⁴ Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 153; Moran, *Design for Religion*, 38-44.

educator's commitment is not 100% to the existing Church. The church educator precisely for the good of the church has to stand against the church in the name of education."²⁸⁵

Experience

If the essence of revelation is redefined, the measure of man's life can become his experience. The *GCD* claimed, "It is...not sufficient for catechesis merely to stimulate a religious experience, even if it is a true one; rather, catechesis should contribute to the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan by preparing the faithful for the reading of Sacred Scripture and the learning of tradition."²⁸⁶

Experience became a major theme in *DR*. It had been a concern of Enlightenment thought. Experience in education was not a fad. Its chief advocate in the United States was John Dewey. "We have already seen the centrality of anthropology, experience and social change to theology. In a movement which preceded theology's and parallels it today, education is also centered on these categories."²⁸⁷ Moran made reference to Dewey, but relies more on the educational theory of Lawrence Cremin.²⁸⁸ Nonetheless, his postulations on experience resemble Dewey's thought concerning revealed truth.

The subject matter of education consists in bodies of information of skills that have been worked out in the past; therefore, the chief business of the school is to transmit them to a new generation...Since the subject-matter as well as the standards for proper conduct are handed down from the past. The attitude of the pupils must be docility, receptivity, and obedience.²⁸⁹

Moran held that "the final norm of truth is human experience."²⁹⁰ He admitted that taking experience as the norm of truth was dangerous, but not because it can lead away from the Truth, Jesus Christ, who does not figure in his argument, but because, "there has always been one group who decided where experience stops...set themselves up to be interpreters of other

²⁸⁵ Moran, *Education Toward Adulthood* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 147.

²⁸⁶ *GCD* 24.

²⁸⁷ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 50.

²⁸⁸ 1925-1990. "An educator, historian, author, and administrator, Lawrence Cremin helped shape (Columbia) Teachers College over four decades. He broadened the study of American educational history beyond the school-centered analysis dominant in the 1940s by advocating a more comprehensive approach: examining the other agencies and institutions that educate children, integrating the study of education with other historical subfields, and comparing education across international boundaries. This interest led to his major work, a three-volume comparative history of education in the United States entitled *American Education*."

http://c250.columbia.edu/c250_celebrates/remarkable_columbians/lawrence_arthur_cremin.html

²⁸⁹ John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1938), 18.

²⁹⁰ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 44.

people's experiences."²⁹¹ The result: "The norm of truth then becomes not the experience as interpreted by doctrine but the doctrine which dictates the experience."²⁹² He quotes Sellers, "There may be a place for biblical norms and the norms of an ecclesiastical tradition, but this place is validated through the contest with experience, and ultimately through the consent of experience rather than through the ontological persistence of the original authority."²⁹³

Moran contradicts *Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum*.

Not surprising...the modern use of revelation in Christian theology has remarkable similarities to the primitive use, that is, revelation is conceived of as a message from God. The one striking difference of the Christian revelation was that it had become a very reasonable matter. Prophecy, miracle and mystery could now be neatly composed into a syllogism that deposits one in the arms of mother church or to her ministers.²⁹⁴

He stated, "The net result in Catholic writing so far has been that faith and revelation are now correlates...The faith response is said to be to God's call or word. God reveals and man believes."²⁹⁵ He concluded, "...revelation is the structure of all experience and faith is an element or basic component of the revelational process. Faith is not directed toward revelation but toward people and the universe. Revelation is not the answer to faith but the underlying reality which gives sense to faith as an open-ended search."²⁹⁶

Moran removed God, especially in the Person of Christ, from his definition of revelation, and consequently his approach to religious education. "He saw experience as the fundamental mode of being that undercut the split between subject and object as well as comprehended both theory and practice."²⁹⁷ The Church does conceive of revelation as relational and reasonable, but only through the incarnational dynamism that Jesus Christ is the fullness of revelation.

Faith as grace is absent.

Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him. Before this faith can be exercised, man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of

²⁹¹ Ibid., 45.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ James Sellers, *Public Ethic* (New York, 1970), 266, cited in Moran, *Design for Religion*, 45.

²⁹⁴ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 39.

²⁹⁵ Moran, *The Present Revelation*, 44.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 45.

²⁹⁷ Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 154.

the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and 'makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth.'²⁹⁸

"In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace: 'Believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace.'²⁹⁹ Therefore faith is a human act. "Trusting in God and cleaving to the truths he has revealed are contrary neither to human freedom nor to human reason."³⁰⁰ It is not contrary to our dignity to "'yield by faith the full submission of . . . intellect and will to God who reveals,' and to share in an interior communion with him."³⁰¹

Moran defined fidelity as the "immediate, personal and affective dimension of faith."³⁰² The word faith "is not beyond salvage but fidelity catches the tenor of what happens in interaction with others."³⁰³ He clarified, "Faith need not but often does designate an impersonal thing, that is, a content of abstractions. Fidelity, in contrast, connotes a personal relation that includes a tug at our feelings."³⁰⁴ He uses Erikson's definition of fidelity, the "ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems"³⁰⁵. "This fidelity arises from the experience of concrete, individual people. What we need is an experiencing of the human as human"³⁰⁶ Fidelity is "the element that keeps human life going at all...fidelity to other persons becomes almost the sole constant in life."³⁰⁷ And without the experience of fidelity it is doubtful that any educational program is going to change people much."³⁰⁸

He moved himself from the fringes of Catholic theology to a stance outside the Church. "Christian theology assumes that a 'Christian revelation' has been given in the Christian scriptures. Theology then consists in stringing out other statements which are defended on the basis that they can be extrapolated from the bible."³⁰⁹ He moved from a Catholic University to a secular one. He provided a perspective on his position in the Church.

²⁹⁸ CCC, 153.

²⁹⁹ CCC, 155; St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 2, 9; cf *Dei Filius* 3; DS 3010.

³⁰⁰ CCC, 154.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, *Dei Filius*; 3

³⁰² Moran, *Design for Religion*, 151.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, 125, cited in Moran, *Design for Religion*, 152.

³⁰⁶ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 152.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

³⁰⁹ Moran, *The Present Revelation*, 154.

The words orthodox and heretical have a doubtful future but these words express what should be of concern to a religious body....It ought to be able to say who is part of the group and who is not. The boundaries will be blurred in many places and the limits should be subject to continual change, but limits do exist for any functioning group....the person who challenges or rejects certain sanctified formulas may not only be a loyal member of a group but one of its most creative and helpful members.³¹⁰

In the end, his appraisal of revelation resembled his appraisal of catechesis, “The heart of the problem with Christian revelation is not *what* is there but *that* it is there.”³¹¹ “If revelation is ‘not something’ there is no need to ‘believe that’ something is true.”³¹² His proposition “undercut both catholic and Protestant positions with the hope of re-establishing them on a firmer, experiential basis.”³¹³ The result, “doctrine then becomes the constantly changing expression of the group’s commitments to one another.”³¹⁴ And finally he asserts, “None of the statements, including those of the bible or church councils, is God’s revelation. Of nothing formulable into human words can it be said: You must ‘believe that’ that is true because God has revealed it.”³¹⁵ Eamon Duffy wrote, “We receive and proclaim the catholic faith which comes to us from the apostles, we do not invent it: the [Christian] Brothers, and my grandmother, knew that too.”³¹⁶

Moran and Kerygmatic Catechesis

Moran rejected catechetical renewal by the kerygmatics, because they “...were too servile to the Magisterium of the Church and their concept of the history of salvation was as rigid as had been that of the Scholastics. It was necessary to recover the most important element of religious education, the theology of revelation, conceived “as a personal communion of knowledge, an interrelationship between God and the individual within a believing community.”³¹⁷

³¹⁰ Ibid., 315-16.

³¹¹ Ibid., 46.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Eamon Duffy, *Faith of our Fathers* (London: Continuum, 2004), 19. He had prefaced this: “But if we believe in the reality of revelation, and if we believe that the Church is entrusted with it, then we have to give concrete meaning and form to that confidence. We cannot indefinitely postpone our obedience and response to the truth, as it seems to me many forms of liberal Protestantism tend to do. If the Church has the gospel of truth, someone, somewhere, has to be trusted to say what it is, and to call upon us to receive it”

³¹⁷ Navarro, FSC, “The Teaching of the Catechism in Lasallian History,”

Boys traced the demise of the kerygmatic approach and the rise of an experiential approach to catechesis through the work of Gabriel Moran. First, she looked at Gerard Sloyan who had initially supported the work of the kerygmatics. “The Use of Sacred Scripture in Catechetics” appears to support a biblical approach to catechesis.³¹⁸ “Despite Sloyan’s rather clear affirmation of the kerygmatics...Sloyan eventually developed something of an ambivalence toward this movement.”³¹⁹ He thought the kerygmatic approach “faddish.” “Sloyan charged that students were losing all sense of immediacy, that religious educators were “retreating” from the real work of catechetics because it proved so satisfactory to give biblical lectures after so many years of giving theological lectures.”³²⁰ She did not explain what “the real work of catechetics” is.

Boys referred to Sloyan’s article “Books on Religious Education 1955-1965” published in *Worship*. He wrote “The impression is given by both Jungmann and Hofinger that a telling of the story of God’s love in biblical categories will achieve the desired results. Both ask for adaptation to the hearer but neither engages to any notable degree.”³²¹ Finally, Boys notes that,

The critique by Sloyan was essentially a reaction to the oversimplification and naiveté of many adherents to the kerygmatic approach: it was not a questioning of *Heilsgeschichte* as a hermeneutical principle per se. Suffice it to say that in this respect, Sloyan was a harbinger of future criticism.³²²

She referred to Marcel Van Caster from *Lumen Vitae*, Louvain. He was editor of and a prolific contributor to the journal *Lumen Vitae*. She credits Van Caster with sparking the repudiation of kerygmatic catechesis, “it was largely his influence that turned the kerygmatics in a more anthropocentric direction following the 1962 Catechetical Study Week in Bangkok.”³²³

³¹⁸ Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 114-115.

³¹⁹ Ibid. 115.

³²⁰ Ibid., 116.

³²¹ Gerard Sloyan, “Books on Religious Education 1955-1965,” *Worship* 40 (1966): 209-17, quoted in Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 116.

³²² Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 116-117.

³²³ Ibid., 120. Marcel van Caster’s contribution to catechesis deserves serious study, which cannot be undertaken here. However, he serves as an important resource to assist the understanding of post-conciliar catechetical scholarship. His work is extremely important in understanding the evolution of ‘experiential catechesis’ as well as values education. He is the author of *God’s Word Today: Principles, Methods and Examples of Catechesis*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966 and *God’s Word Today: Principles, Methods and Examples of Catechesis*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966.

Boys gave oblique credence to kerygmatic influence in the post-conciliar catechetical documents. She believed that the use of *Heilsgeschichte* did not suddenly disappear, “The emergence of *Heilsgeschichte* from time to time in official documents, such as the *National Catechetical Directory* and occasional articles, reflects this.”³²⁴

Boys was aware of the changing emphasis in religious education textbooks in the 60’s, moving from the kerygmatic to the experiential. “Kerygmatic renewal work did not control religious education books to the extent that it [experiential] did, and new religion series incorporated more ‘existential’ emphasis.”³²⁵

Ultimately, she believes that the death knell sounded for the demise of *Heilsgeschichte* with its repudiation by Gabriel Moran. “The most vivid example is Moran’s attempt to reformulate an understanding of revelation begun in his two-volume *Theology of Revelation* and *Catechesis of Revelation* in 1966 and continued in his recent *The Present Revelation*.”³²⁶

Moran and God’s Initiative

What was Moran’s understanding of salvation history? He has demonstrated an anthropocentric hermeneutic and emphasizes human experience in relation to revelation, which is not closed. He was reluctant to allow Scripture to speak for itself.

In *Theology of Revelation* he did not deny “that there are objective realities in the revelational process.”³²⁷ And he acknowledged that God spoke to the Israelites, noting that in order to have a “fully personal relationship, however human words had to be spoken to draw out the implicit meaning of the experiences.”³²⁸ He reduced God’s self-revelation to the Israelites to their experience. The Church holds that “Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men.”³²⁹

Moran’s approach appears to begin with God, “It is not surprising, therefore, that in God’s dealing with Israel...”, however he quickly moves to man, “the continuing experience of

³²⁴ Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 121.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 46.

³²⁸ Ibid.

God's activity raised up men who spoke their interpretive words after having reflected deeply upon their own lives and those of their brothers. These men were the prophets."³³⁰ It was the experience of God's activity that raised up prophets, not God himself.

Moran misses the intensity God's personal intervention in the lives those he called to be his messengers. (This was evident in his understanding of fidelity rather than faith.) This contradicts Moran's insistence on the personal experience of revelation. God called: Abraham to leave all he knew and possessed "for a land I will show you" (Genesis 12:1); Moses, "O come, now! I will send you to Pharaoh to lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10); Isaiah, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?' 'Here I am,' I said; 'send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8); Jeremiah, Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. (Jer. 1:4-10) "If anyone says that divine revelation cannot be made credible by external signs, and that therefore men should be drawn to the faith only by their personal internal experience or by private inspiration, let him be anathema."³³¹

Subsequently, there are difficulties with Moran's proposition that "The prophet is not one who has concepts and truths infused into him by God. He is rather one who with his spirit, his heart, and his entire life reflects upon the experience of his people...Prophecy is not revelation, but revelation emerges in prophecy as the meaning of the words or as the person expresses himself in bodily symbol."³³²

Aquinas postulated,

In prophetic revelation the prophet's mind is moved by the Holy Ghost, as an instrument that is deficient in regard to the principal agent. Now the prophet's mind is moved not only to apprehend something, but also to speak or to do something; sometimes indeed to all these three together, sometimes to two, sometimes to one only, and in each case there may be a defect in the prophet's knowledge. For when the prophet's mind is moved to think or apprehend a thing, sometimes he is led merely to apprehend that thing, and sometimes he is further led to know that it is divinely revealed to him.

Again, sometimes the prophet's mind is moved to speak something, so that he understands what the Holy Ghost means by the words he utters; like David who said (2 Kings [2 Samuel] 23:2): "*The Spirit of the Lord hath spoken by me*"; while, on the

³²⁹ CCC, 50.

³³⁰ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 46.

³³¹ Pius X, *Pascendi dominici gregis*, 6, quoting Dei Filius.

³³² Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 46.

other hand, sometimes the person whose mind is moved to utter certain words knows not what the Holy Ghost means by them, as was the case with Caiphas (John 11:51).³³³

Moran's interpretation ignores the covenantal relationship God has with his people, that "He therefore chose the race of Israel as a people unto Himself. With it He set up a covenant."³³⁴ These were mediated through individuals: Noah, Abrahams, Moses, and David. When the Israelites forgot the covenant, God's desire to have his people return to him was given through the prophets, "Step by step He taught and prepared this people, making known in its history both Himself and the decree of His will and making it holy unto Himself."³³⁵

McBride believed that the content of catechesis came from experience, the personal experience of an encounter with God. He asserted *The Basic Teachings* came from the Church – the Bible- from the prophets and apostles. Then he asks, "Yes, but what moved the prophets and apostles to utter these teachings?"³³⁶ "I submit that religious experience is the basic event to keep in mind."³³⁷ He disagreed with Moran's proposition. "Religious experience means that the prophets and apostles met the Lord...An interior meeting with God precedes an exterior expression of the Lord's teaching."³³⁸ This exterior expression of the Word is contained in Sacred Scripture, "The Old Testament is prophecy. The New Testament proclamation is Gospel."³³⁹

Dei Verbum speaks of God's initiative,

To this people which He had acquired for Himself, He so manifested Himself through words and deeds as the one true and living God that Israel came to know by experience the ways of God with men. Then, too, when God Himself spoke to them through the mouth of the prophets, Israel daily gained a deeper and clearer understanding of His ways and made them more widely known among the nations (see Ps. 21:29; 95:1-3; Is. 2:1-4; Jer. 3:17).³⁴⁰

Moran believed "Prophecy, therefore is not the passive, inert reception of something. It is the active human response that the prophet makes in the light of his reflection (directed by a

³³³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 173, art. 4.

³³⁴ *LG*, 9.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ McBride, *Creative Teaching in Christian Education*, 30.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *DV*, 14.

divine charism) to his own experience and that of the nation.”³⁴¹ In reality, Moran rejects God’s initiative even in their ability to respond, as the Catechism states, “By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him, and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity.”³⁴²

McBride held that the prophets and apostles did not respond in light of personal reflection, but as a response in faith.

Religious experience is the name given to a meeting between God and a human person. The Prophets met God. The apostles met Jesus, the Son of God. The name given to their spiritual response is faith. God comes in love to the consciousness of the prophet. The prophet opens his heart to God. This act of opening and adherence is faith...Faith not only refers to personal adherence and trust in God, but also the public expression thereof.³⁴³

Moran ignored divine pedagogy. “Pedagogy” connotes that someone is imparting knowledge to someone receiving it. *DV* refers to the Old Testament, “These books, though they also contain some things which are incomplete and temporary, nevertheless show us true divine pedagogy.”³⁴⁴ The *GCD* explained, “In the history of revelation God used pedagogy in such a way that he announced his plan of salvation in the old Covenant prophetically and by means of figures, and thus prepared the coming of his Son, the author of the New Covenant and the perfecter of the faith (cf. Heb. 12, 2).”³⁴⁵

The *GDC* reiterated,

God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: he uses human events and words to communicate his plan; he does so progressively and in stages so as to draw even closer to man. God, in fact, operates in such a manner that man comes to knowledge of his salvific plan by means of the events of salvation history and the inspired words which accompany and explain them.³⁴⁶

God also chose to reveal himself in a way that his creatures could understand.

He assumes the character of the person, the individual and the community according to the conditions in which they are found. He liberates the person from the bonds of evil and attracts him to himself by bonds of love. He causes the person to grow progressively and patiently towards the maturity of a free son, faithful and obedient to his word. To this end, as a creative and insightful teacher, God transforms events in

³⁴¹ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 47.

³⁴² *CCC*, 52.

³⁴³ McBride, *Creative Teaching in Christian Education*, 30-31.

³⁴⁴ *DV*, 15.

³⁴⁵ *GCD*, 33.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations. Thus he entrusts words of instruction and catechesis which are transmitted from generation to generation.³⁴⁷

Moran would not disagree. "...the prophetic understanding is directed not to isolated actions but to human life in its full temporality."³⁴⁸ "God began the dialogue at the level at which man was to be found."³⁴⁹ He says, "God's invitation to a higher life consisted first of all in the actions of love and kindness which could enable man to recognize himself as lovable and give him the courage to face his own condition."³⁵⁰ Instead of man coming to know himself as created by God and responding to him in love, man comes to know himself, period. He fails to acknowledge that "The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself."³⁵¹

The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists, it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator.³⁵²

"When the Old Testament emerged from the Jewish people it was not so much a recording of 'revelations' as it was the history of the Jewish people unified and understood through prophetic understanding."³⁵³ In reality it was a record of their experience of God revealing himself, "Through the patriarchs, and after them through Moses and the prophets, He taught this people to acknowledge Himself the one living and true God, provident father and just judge, and to wait for the Savior promised by Him, and in this manner prepared the way for the Gospel down through the centuries."³⁵⁴

Moran made no reference to the unfolding of God's self-revelation, "In the human situation the interpretation of events and the conveyance of meaning take place within a context that is generally larger than we realize, and in fact is extensible."³⁵⁵ "Remembering" the events of

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 139.

³⁴⁸ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 46.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 49.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ CCC, 27.

³⁵² Ibid.; GS, 19.

³⁵³ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 48.

³⁵⁴ DV, 3.

³⁵⁵ Moran, *Theology of Revelation*, 49.

the past was vital to the Israelite people and to religious Jews today. This is reflected in their liturgical life which recalled the past, but the past in context of God's actions in that past.³⁵⁶

It is true that the prophets did not enunciate truths or definitions or doctrine, instead they proclaim *truth*, as received from God. Moran tends to limit God, never man. Moran's efforts fall short in acknowledging that,

In sacred Scripture, therefore, while the truth and holiness of God always remains intact, the marvelous "condescension" of eternal wisdom is clearly shown, 'that we may learn the gentle kindness of God, which words cannot express, and how far He has gone in adopting His language with thoughtful concern for our weak human nature.'³⁵⁷

Adult Religious Education

Boys believed that "The foundational piece for Moran's departure from his earlier understanding of revelation was his 1971 publication *Design for Religion*...Here Moran attempted to present a new framework for religious education or, as he now preferred to call it, 'ecumenical education.'³⁵⁸ Pennock agreed, "More than any other work written by Moran, this book presented his most systematic approach to a curriculum of religious education, childhood to adult."³⁵⁹ In *Design for Religion* there is a definite departure from any sense of either "traditional catechesis" or "new catechesis."³⁶⁰

Neither author mentions *Vision and Tactics*, published in 1968. In some ways it segues his earlier work and *DR*. One reviewer felt it represented "the efforts of a leading figure in American religious education to point the way toward the fruitful and informative experimentation that can change the face of catechetics in this country."³⁶¹ In the text he develops his desire for adult catechesis in the context of his new configuration of revelation.

VT's opening phrase was cited previously, "Assuming the most commonly understood meaning of the word, I would say that the fundamental problem of catechesis is that it exists."³⁶² Moran believed "...that Christianity is a religion for people attaining adulthood

³⁵⁶ Lev. 23; also note Jesus' participation in these feasts, ultimately the Passover.

³⁵⁷ *DV*, 13.

³⁵⁸ Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education*, 153

³⁵⁹ Pennock, "The development of the Religious Educational Thought of Gabriel Moran," 176.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

³⁶¹ Robert C. Doran, review of *Vision and Tactics*, *America*, July 20, 1968.

³⁶² Moran, *Vision and Tactics*, 19.

both in years and in maturity.”³⁶³ The *GCD* advised, “They should also remember that catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis.”³⁶⁴ Are Moran and the *GCD* in agreement?

Referring to *CR*, he writes “if one took seriously the theology presupposed in the book one might conclude that whole focus of catechesis should be shifted from children to adults.”³⁶⁵ Moran says Christianity is defined from its adult model and demands that people grow up.³⁶⁶ Jesus says, however, “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

“Adult-orientated rather than child-orientated religious education has been our most recent trend, supported by the insights of Gabriel Moran in *Vision and Tactics*. Faith is an adult experience; theology is an adult search. Therefore...while we espouse Moran’s thesis, many religious educators do so with a twinge of guilt.”³⁶⁷ Where do children fit into his plan? Maria de la Cruz Aymes, the “mother” of kerygmatic catechesis in the *On Our Way Series*, insisted that because the Christian religion is revealed and the faith of the Christian rests in the Old Testament and through Jesus Christ, “Our teaching from the very beginning must be based on Holy Scripture and guided what has been presented to us by our Mother the Church.”³⁶⁸ “Gradually we try to awaken in the child the desire to give thanks for all these gifts...It is not too difficult to teach a child how to pray...”³⁶⁹

³⁶³ Ibid., 13.

³⁶⁴ *GCD*, 20.

³⁶⁵ Moran, *Vision and Tactics*, 12.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 13.

³⁶⁷ Richard Reichert, “‘Periodic’ Religious Education,” *Living Light* 7 (1970): 58.

³⁶⁸ Aymes “Teaching the Very Young,” in *Modern Catechetics*, ed. Gerard Sloyan (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 109.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. See also the work of Maria Montessori’s *The Child in the Church*. Sofia Cavalletti’s *The Religious Potential of the Child*, and the work of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, developed by Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi. They based their work on that of Montessori. The members of the secular institute Notre Dame de Vie, Venasque, France have also developed a way to draw small children into contemplative prayer. Noelle le Duc was inspired to use simple visual aids to illustrate the stories of faith read directly from Scripture, the child is drawn into a prayerful relationship with Jesus Christ. Moran ignores the stories of deep childhood faith in the lives of many saints: The child martyrs Tarcicius and Agnes; the Native American Kateri Tekakwitha; the Ugandan teenage martyrs Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa who worked as catechists; Catherine of Siena and Thérèse of Lisieux, who were both declared Doctors of the Church.

Sofia Cavalletti asked, “Is it justifiable to give religious education to children?”³⁷⁰ She answered by sharing her observations of young children who have “a relationship with God that goes beyond the intellectual plane; it is founded on a deep existential level.”³⁷¹ Her insights point to the futility of Moran’s proposition for experiential religious education. “The world of the child’s religion is a different world from that of the adult. The adult no longer has that open and peaceful relationship with God which is natural to the child; for the adult, the religious life is sometimes a strain and a struggle.”³⁷² She adds, “For the adult, the immediate reality at times acts as a screen to the transcendent reality that seems to be so apparent in the child.”³⁷³ If she is correct, then it would seem almost impossible for the adult to come to know God only through his own experience. “The younger the child the more capable he is of receiving great things, and the child is satisfied only with the great and essential things.”³⁷⁴

Cavalletti identified the adult’s task is to initiate the child into certain realities, the events that are at the basis of Christianity. “There is an inheritance of truth and values that the adult should transmit with the whole of his lived life, but also through the word. In other words, the adult should proclaim God, who reveals His love through His Christ; he should give the ‘kerygma.’”³⁷⁵

In reality, Moran speaks more of teaching theology than catechizing. He complained that textbooks give the impression of renewal but do so by watering down the latest theology.³⁷⁶ “However, theology is not meant for little children”³⁷⁷ True, but Moran alludes to the fact that in religious education of adults, theology is being taught. As has been noted, these are related but distinct. An important piece that is missing, despite the fact that he admits that revelation is relational, is the fundamental goal of catechesis: to put people in touch, in intimacy with Jesus Christ. For him, religious education is entirely educative.

³⁷⁰ Sofia Cavalletti, *Religious Potential of the Child* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992), 30.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁷⁶ Moran, *Vision and Tactics*, 34.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Throughout *Vision and Tactics* he stresses that revelation connotes a relationship between the subject and God. He writes, “Without people there is no revelation and, less obviously, without revelation there are no people.”³⁷⁸ “Revelation is what occurs in the flesh of each historical being. Each man must find God in the world-line of his own history.”³⁷⁹ He accepts that God is still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but adds, “The total, fleshly, social life of her people is what the church calls tradition and it is there that God’s revelation is to be found. Far from denying the uniqueness of Christ, my assertion of God’s continuing revelation in the church is an act of faith in the risen lord as the norm of the whole of world history.”³⁸⁰

Moran and Catholic Education

Moran makes little distinction between Catholic and Protestant religious education.

However, “since many people seem to assume that the teaching of religion is the very *raison d’etre* of the Catholic schools the issue should be carefully examined.”³⁸¹ The Congregation for Education wrote that the Catholic School,

...would no longer deserve the title if, no matter how good its reputation for teaching in other areas there were just grounds for a reproach of negligence or deviation in religious education properly so-called. It is not true that such education is always given implicitly or indirectly. The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying reason for its existence, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the overall education of the students.³⁸²

Moran states, “They must realize that their *raison d’etre* will not be found in the teaching of religion but in the running of an institution that serves the human and religious needs of the whole community.”³⁸³

He is not supportive of what was being done in the Catholic school and desired to change both religious education and the Church itself (while being a Brother of the Christian Schools). “Changing religious education in the church is equivalent to changing the

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 23.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 26.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 145.

³⁸² Congregation for Christian Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*, 66, 1988. This document was promulgated on the Feast of John Baptist de la Salle, the founder of the Christian Brothers of which Moran was a member. “The religious orders, I have urged, ought to disengage themselves qua orders from the catholic school system” (Moran, *Design for Religion*, 158).

³⁸³ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 159.

church.”³⁸⁴ In a line of thinking that resembles that of Dewey, Moran complains that the Catholic school lacks equality.

If the church actually functioned as a community of people dedicated to searching for the divine, reflecting on the implications of the quest, and living the consequences of the reflection, its whole mode of operation would be educational. The Roman Catholic church does not succeed very well in this account because it lacks communion, the sharing of educational experience by equals.³⁸⁵

This rests on his belief of experience as the norm of truth. “Such equality includes the recognition that any man may see a truth which is worth sharing with all men.”³⁸⁶

Religious Dimension reiterates that the Council, “declared that what makes the Catholic school distinctive is its religious dimension, and that this is to be found in a) the educational climate, b) the personal development of each student, c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith.”³⁸⁷ Moran felt, “Schools are in constant danger of violating this equality and integrity. Professors can easily begin to think of themselves as the possessors of knowledge to be dispensed rather than as humble interpreters of experience.”³⁸⁸

Moran also rejected the Bishop as teacher. “The supposition that the bishop (and the Magisterium) is the teacher of the diocese and that religion teachers in the schools are extension of the bishop is simply a fallacy which must be put to rest.”³⁸⁹ “Some teachers

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 146.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 147.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Congregation for Christian Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*, 1.

³⁸⁸ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 148.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 149. The Code of Canon Law : Can. 802 §1. If schools which offer an education imbued with a Christian spirit are not available, it is for the diocesan bishop to take care that they are established. §2. Where it is expedient, the diocesan bishop is to make provision for the establishment of professional schools, technical schools, and other schools required by special needs.

Can. 803 §1. A Catholic school is understood as one which a competent ecclesiastical authority or a public ecclesiastical juridic person directs or which ecclesiastical authority recognizes as such through a written document. §2. The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life. §3. Even if it is in fact Catholic, no school is to bear the name Catholic school without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority.

Can. 804 §1. The Catholic religious instruction and education which are imparted in any schools whatsoever or are provided through the various instruments of social communication are subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the conference of bishops to issue general norms about this field of action and for the diocesan bishop to regulate and watch over it. §2. The local ordinary is to be concerned that those who are designated teachers of religious instruction in schools, even in non-Catholic ones, are outstanding in correct doctrine, the witness of a Christian life, and teaching skill.

Can. 805 For his own diocese, the local ordinary has the right to appoint or approve teachers of religion and even to remove them or demand that they be removed if a reason of religion or morals requires it.

deserve to be fired, some courses in religion ought to be dropped; but having educational policy directed by agents of a chancery is ridiculously inappropriate procedure.”³⁹⁰ He affirms that he is not attacking bishops personally, but he sees their role as “points of unity in a community or as spokesman of the gospel for a national church.”³⁹¹

He is also concerned with textbooks, and this is pertinent for a discovery of the causes of the ‘deficiencies.’

Episcopal committees still claim the right to examine religion textbooks and force out teachers who are not properly docile. It should be clear that I am not saying that all the new catechetical books are of excellent quality (I think most of them are dreadful) or that all religion teachers are doing their jobs perfectly. I am simply saying that the catholic hierarchy has no particular experience in judging these matters.³⁹²

Moran moves from the Catholic school to university. “In recent years, teachers in catholic colleges have been reaching the point of having ‘academic freedom’ in the teaching of religion. The Catholic hierarchy, reluctantly in many cases, has had to acknowledge the right of the university to set its own policy and judge its own faculty.”³⁹³ In 1990, John Paul promulgated *Ex Corde Ecclesia*, reiterating that the Catholic University is “born from the heart of the Church”, and must have the following essential characteristics:

1. a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.³⁹⁴

Moran and the *General Catechetical Directory*

In *Focus on American Catechetics*, Sullivan and Meyers focused a great deal of their attention on revelation. Moran’s influence on that commentary can be seen. The commentary denigrates the practice of theology and catechesis in the United States, presumably before the Council. “It is understandable that in the immigrant Church of the not-too-distant past, uniformity of theology, catechetical expression, and religious practice

³⁹⁰ Moran, *Design for Religion*, 149.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 148.

³⁹² Ibid., 150.

³⁹³ Ibid., 149-150.

³⁹⁴ *Ex Corde Ecclesia*, 13

were stressed.”³⁹⁵ Nonetheless, the commentary states, theological plurality has always been practiced, using the New Testament, which contains, “a number of different theologies rather than a single unified synthesis.”³⁹⁶ This is not quite accurate, the Church teaches that the entire Scriptures are a unified whole, despite the different genres and audiences utilized to hand on what is essentially the Word. Sullivan and Myers use their perspective of pluralism to move to the necessity of an experience-based catechetics in the United States. Their rationalization for this lies in their stress on two theologies of revelation. They begin with a proposition that has been noted frequently in the body of this work. “How one views revelation and faith will determine in large measure how the religious educator shapes his work.”³⁹⁷ If one stressed revelation as a body of doctrines, “and faith as the assent of the mind to these doctrines, then his task as a catechist will be to transmit the divinely revealed doctrine with painstaking accuracy to his students.”³⁹⁸ If, on the other hand, “the educator views revelation in more dynamic and personal terms, he will seek to help students become conscious of the signs of the living God present in their own lives.”³⁹⁹ The commentary echoes the work of Moran.

The Commentary believes that the latter position would induce the catechist to, “begin from the experience of the student and will provide real and vicarious experiences upon which the student can reflect.”⁴⁰⁰ The commentary clarified, “This does not mean that the teacher in this category is not interested in students learning the truths of their faith, but it does mean that he views his task as having greater perimeters.”⁴⁰¹ And yet in no way does the Commentary delineate how these truths of the faith are to be handed on. Instead, it moves to an experiential approach that would be necessary because “God continues to reveal Himself in man’s present experience.”⁴⁰²

“If this were all that the document had to say on the subject, it would be clear that the contemporary theology of revelation had inched its predecessor out into the junk heap of discarded theological theory.”⁴⁰³ It proceeds to stress that in reality, the *Directory* falls back

³⁹⁵ Sullivan and Meyers, *A Commentary on the General Catechetical Directory*, 27.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 25

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

on the belief that revelation has imparted a deposit of truth. “One of the very real problems with this key section of the *Directory* is not only that it reflects two significantly different theologies of revelation, but that it never successfully integrates or synthesizes the two.”⁴⁰⁴ “At times it is difficult to suppress the feeling that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. The practical consequence is a certain amount of ambiguity as to just what religious education is about.”⁴⁰⁵ In their determination to show that the *Directory* did not know what it was doing they push for an application of catechesis in the United States that is purely experiential. “In recent years, the experiential approach has been growing in popularity as religious educators have attempted to translate the contemporary theology of revelation into catechetical practice.”⁴⁰⁶

While they admitted those catechized should know the truths of the faith, it fails to hand them on. “Using the student’s own experience, the catechist leads him to discover the various aspects of the Christian mystery, not as abstract doctrinal formulations descending from somewhere on high, but integrated in his own life experience.”⁴⁰⁷ “It contrasts this with the approach of the much-vilified *Baltimore Catechism* that was, “professedly content-centered.”⁴⁰⁸ Despite this, it boldly proclaims that “the content versus experience dilemma is seen to be more illusory than real.”⁴⁰⁹

Moran and the National Catechetical Directory

Anne Marie Mongoven served on the committee that constructed the National Catechetical Directory. Her doctoral dissertation, directed by Berard Marthaler, describes its construction. She produced a valuable historical account of catechesis in the 20th century, and focused on the work of Jungmann, the Catechetical Study Weeks, and the work of Gabriel Moran regarding revelation. She supported Moran’s dissection of the kerygmatic renewal, and praised his work.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. In a footnote in his paper on Catechesis in Augustine, Kevane makes reference to this passage from the Commentary. “This cannot but throw catechesis into turmoil and crises, for it conflicts with the defined doctrine of the Church on the distinction between supernatural faith and natural reason as distinct orders of knowledge (see Vatican I, *Dei Filius*; D-S 3015) and leads directly to a decline of interest in the formulated teachings of the Ordinary and Universal Magisterium teaching of the Church, or even a strange hostility to them” (*Catechesis in Augustine*, The Saint Augustine Lecture, 1983 [Villanova, Penn.: Villanova University Press, 1989], 21, n. 20).

⁴⁰⁸ Sullivan and Meyers, *A Commentary on the General Catechetical Directory*, 28.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 30

She noted “the question of its [revelation’s] on-going or continuing character, and the nature of the relationship between revelation and catechesis were questions to be raised at every stage of the directory’s development.”⁴¹⁰ Marthaler wrote, “Some theologians and popular writers try to capture this dynamic quality by speaking of on-going and ‘continuing’ revelation. Their efforts have led to some confusion, not to say, controversy, because of the choice of terms to undermine the ‘unique, irrevocable and definitive’ character of revelation in and through Jesus Christ.”⁴¹¹

She detailed the positions and arguments concerning this issue in each of the drafts of the NCD. The debates included concern for Christ as the fullness of revelation, that revelation was closed with the death of the last apostle, revelation and the deposit of faith. The arguments also concerned the nature of the response of faith. The third and final draft, “presented revelation as the mystery of God’s self-revelation, a communication which calls for a response of faith. The salvation history model of revelation dominates in Chapter III. The contemporary-experiential model was clearly presented in Chapter II.”⁴¹² This would reflect a synthesis of the approach of the kerygmatic’s and that of Moran. She concludes, “The concept of on-going revelation is included in the draft, although it remains in tension with a more static view of revelation.”⁴¹³

When the final draft was presented to the Bishops, 306 amendments were proposed. “The topic provoking the most debate was that of revelation: revelation understood as ending with the Apostolic Age, or as an on-going dialogue between God and human beings.”⁴¹⁴ Finally, the debate was settled by inserting a paragraph submitted by Humberto Cardinal Medeiros.⁴¹⁵

The Roman Pontiff and the bishops, in view of their office and of the importance of the matter, strive painstakingly and by appropriate means to inquire properly into that revelation and to give apt expression of the contents. But they do not allow that there could be any new public revelation pertaining to the divine deposit of faith’ (LG 25). Pope Paul VI reiterates this teaching: “revelation is inserted in time, in history, at a

⁴¹⁰ Mongoven, “The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis,” 221.

⁴¹¹ Marthaler, *Sharing the Light of Faith: An Official Commentary*, 28. Bishop Lucker was on the committee that reviewed the commentary.

⁴¹² Mongoven, “The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis,” 254.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 158, quoting Sr. Mariella Frye, “Sharing the Light of Faith: The Process,” *Living Light* 16 (1979): 153.

⁴¹⁵ Mongoven, “The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis,” 259.

precise date, on the occasion of a specific event, and must be regarded as concluded and complete for us with the death of the Apostles' (Denz.2421).⁴¹⁶

Nonetheless, Mongoven wrote, "The two quotations...when taken out of context, might seem to deny the possibility of a present revelation..."⁴¹⁷

Sharing the Light of Faith was approved by a vote of the Bishops, 218-12. It was then sent to the Congregation for the Clergy. They required changes particularly in the area of revelation. The original NCD had originally submitted a confusing text in #49a. regarding the difference between Divine revelation and other revelations, using upper and lower case letters respectively. This became #50:

The word 'revelation' is used in this document to refer to that divine public revelation which closed at the end of the Apostolic Age. The terms 'manifestation' and 'communication' are used for other modes by which God continues to make Himself known and share Himself with human beings through his presence in the Church and the world.⁴¹⁸

The revisions were completed. Mongoven wrongly asserted that they "strengthened the concept of continuing revelation."⁴¹⁹

Mongoven's conclusion discussed revelation in the official text of *Sharing the Light of Faith*. She quotes Moran's commentary on the document, as well as Marthaler's "official" commentary. Moran commented that

...the best thing about the third chapter is that it keeps alive the problem of revelation. The problematic nature of revelation is rarely addressed in Catholic and Protestant theology today, but any people who teach religion know a problem remains. If teachers are to invite people to faith—which is defined as 'a free response to God revealing'—then what is the meaning of those last words.⁴²⁰

Conclusion

The influence of Jungmann and Hofinger on the magisterial documents is clear. Moran's influence in American catechetical texts and catechist training is just as clear. His approach usurped the magisterial documents in the United States. While blame for the deficiencies does not rest solely on him, he deserves the lion's share. Religious education was reduced to

⁴¹⁶ Marthaler, *Sharing the Light of Faith: An Official Commentary*, 53.

⁴¹⁷ Mongoven, "The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis," 260.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 264; Marthaler, *Sharing the Light of Faith: An Official Commentary*, 50.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 265.

experience. "In the Catholic tradition, the call for freedom came from Gabriel Moran."⁴²¹ Barker reports that Moran felt that recounting salvation history was "nothing but a boring story of events that happened centuries ago with little relation to real people and their experience..."⁴²² Barker believed that Moran was rejecting the imposition of truths from outside the person's experience. "This is a denial of the freedom of the individual to reflect upon one's own experience and to discover the presence of the revealing God in one own personal history."⁴²³ Thomas Groome provides the medium by which this approach to religious education could become the norm.

⁴²⁰ Gabriel Moran, "The National Catechetical Directory: Two Views," *National Catholic Reporter*, June 1, 1979, p. 18, quoted in Mongoven, "The Relationship between Revelation and Catechesis," 270.

⁴²¹ Kenneth Barker, *Religious Education, Catechesis, and Freedom*, (Birmingham AL: Religious Education Press, 1981), 76. Berard Marthaler wrote the Forward.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

Chapter IV

The Pedagogy of God and Catechetical Methodology

Introduction

As salutary as this text review by the US Bishops Ad Hoc Committee is, some fear that one weakness in catechetical texts which merited only a brief mention in the list of deficiencies will survive the process because it is generally thought to be more a question of methodology than content. In fact, catechetical methodology is not only important insofar as it is the vehicle for imparting the content of the faith, but because, if wrongly conceived, it can undermine the whole content of the faith.¹

Catechetical methodology is the means by which the aims of catechesis can be realized. All teachers follow a methodology: one that they have developed; set down by the institution in which they teach; or one developed by scholars of educative practice.

Ratzinger observed,

The faith was arbitrarily dealt with in the way in which it was explicated, and some of its parts were called into question, despite the fact that they belong to a whole, separated from which they appear disparate and meaningless. What lay behind this erroneous decision, so hasty and yet so universal?...It certainly has something to do with the general evolution of teaching and pedagogy, which is itself characterized by an excess of method in relation to the content of the various disciplines. The methods become criteria for the content rather than the vehicle.²

The *Oxford University Dictionary* defines methodology as a “system of methods used in a particular field.” Pedagogy is the overarching theory that underlies the development or choice of a certain methodology. “God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: he uses human events and words to communicate his plan; he does so progressively and in stages, so as to draw even

¹ Innerst, *Catholic Dossier*, Ignatius Press, November 1997.

² Ratzinger, “Sources and Transmission of the Faith” *Communio*, 19, (1983):19. This address was Cardinal Ratzinger’s contribution to a symposium entitled, “Handling on the Faith Today,” given with Cardinal Macharski, and Bishops Danneels and Ryan during the month of January, 1983 in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Fourviere in Lyons, at the joint invitation of Cardinal Lustiger of Paris and Archbishop Decourtray of Lyons. It was later published in *Handling on the Faith in an Age of Disbelief* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006.)

closer to man.”³ The Church has never required one specific methodology, recognizing the uniqueness of each catechetical setting. The evangelical and catechetical activities of the past two millennia are replete with bold and creative methodologies.

This chapter seeks to determine the methodological obligations of catechists in relation to the Divine pedagogy, which fully manifested itself in Jesus Christ. It will look initially at how Christ taught. It will then look at the catechetical work of St. Paul and St. Augustine, who has been called the Father of Catechetics, the preventive method of St. John Bosco and the place of personal influence in the life and teaching of John Henry Cardinal Newman. Finally it will look at the methodology developed in the last part of the second millennium by Thomas Groome, whose influence is ongoing.

In 2000, John Paul noted, “The period of the Jubilee introduces us to the vigorous language which the divine pedagogy of salvation uses to lead man to conversion and penance.”⁴ This brief passage is reminiscent of what has been seen so far in this study: the divine pedagogy is directed toward salvation, and is foundational for catechetical methodology.

The vocation of the catechist is fundamentally pedagogical, as we have seen from the very origins of the word. The catechist is called, however, to a unique form of pedagogy because what is taught is not just knowledge but a person, a divine person with a divine purpose, the purpose of uniting the listener to himself in his people, in his Church. No human pedagogical system can do this. What the catechist needs to learn is the pedagogy of God himself. How then does God teach? We can see God’s way of teaching, of revealing himself, in the Scriptures. In fact God uses all that is human. All that is good in human pedagogical methods can be drawn into his way but no human system is sufficient in itself.⁵

The Pedagogy of God

The books of the Old Testament, “...show us true divine pedagogy...[They] give expression to a lively sense of God, contain a store of sublime teachings about God,

³ GCD 38.

⁴ John Paul II, *Incarnationis Mysterium*, November, 2000

⁵ Caroline Farey, “The Vocation of the Catechist” in *Hear, O Islands*, ed. John Redford, (Dublin: Veritas, 2002), 311.

sound wisdom about human life, and a wonderful treasury of prayers, and in them the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way.”⁶

God commanded Moses to teach: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord;” he calls for a personal response to this doctrine, “and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” He then directs that this be handed on, “And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children;” the words themselves become part of the very fabric of their daily lives, “talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”⁷

Jesus’ last words include a command to teach. As in Deuteronomy, the content of the message was to be handed on. It is not “the talent buried in a field” for fear of the master.⁸

But what the Lord preached that one time, or what was wrought in Him for the saving of the human race, must be spread abroad and published to the ends of the earth (Acts 1.8), beginning from Jerusalem (cf. Lk 24.27), so that what He accomplished at that one time for the salvation of all, may in the course of time come to achieve its effect in all.⁹

Subsequently, “Whence the duty that lies on the Church of spreading the faith and the salvation of Christ, not only in virtue of the express command which was inherited from the Apostles by the order of bishops, assisted by the priests, together with the successor of Peter and supreme shepherd of the Church, but also in virtue of that life which flows from Christ into His members...”¹⁰

The *GCD* remarks “In the history of revelation God used pedagogy in such a way that he announced his plan of salvation in the old Covenant prophetically and by means of figures, and thus prepared the coming of his Son, the author of the New Covenant and the perfecter of the faith (cf. Heb. 12, 2).¹¹ The *GDC* is more insistent: “Catechesis, as

⁶ *DV*, 15.

⁷ Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

⁸ Mt. 25:14-30.

⁹ *Ad Gentes* 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 5.

¹¹ *GCD*, 33.

communication of divine Revelation, is radically inspired by the pedagogy of God, as displayed in Christ and in the Church.”¹² “Mindful of the pedagogy used by God, she [the Church] too uses a pedagogy, a new one, however, one that corresponds to the new demands of his message.”¹³ Consequently, “The divine word becomes present in catechesis through the human word” and urged “...catechesis ought to express the word of God faithfully and present it suitably...in the language of the men to whom it is directed (cf. DV, 13; OT, 16).”¹⁴

The *GDC* praised the *GCD* for acting “as a point of reference for content and pedagogy, as well as for methodology.”¹⁵ Nonetheless, sufficient attention is still not given to the demands and the originality of that pedagogy which is proper to the faith. It remains easy to fall into a “content-method” dualism, with resultant reductionism to one or other extreme; with regard to the pedagogical dimension the requisite theological discernment has not always been exercised.”¹⁶

What occurred between the directories? To understand what the Church considers authentic methodology, it is necessary to look at the history of methodology in the Church.

In 1957, Msgr. Rudolph Bandas wrote *Contents and Method of Catechization*, from a Christocentric perspective concerning methodology. Much of his thought, like those of Jungmann and Hofinger, are found in the post-conciliar catechetical documents. He affirmed that the Church’s catechetical methodology has been abiding. “He who created the human soul and determined the laws according to which the mind assimilates and attains truth must of necessity be the pedagogue and educator *par excellence*.”¹⁷ Thus his first chapter is dedicated to Christ the Divine Teacher. Bandas held that Christ, “As head and Redeemer of the human race our Lord had a perfect

¹² *GDC*, 143.

¹³ *GDC*, 33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Preface.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁷ Rudolph Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization for the use of Lay Teachers of Religion, Sisters, Seminarians and Priests* (St. Paul, Minn.: The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine of the Archdiocese of St. Paul, 1957), 126. Bandas served as the archdiocesan director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and the Rector of St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. He served as a peritus at the Council, attending all sessions.

knowledge of all the truths necessary for salvation. Whenever Christ taught these supernatural truths He at the same time aided the hearer's mind by illuminating it with grace."¹⁸ The GCD used similar terms, "Accordingly, the ministry of the word presents Christ not only as its object but also as the one who opens the hearts of hearers to receive and understand the divine proclamation (cf. Acts 16, 14)."¹⁹ "To those who were wondering where he had acquired such knowledge, 'Jesus answered them, and said: My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.' [John 7:15-16] His was the fullness of knowledge by reason of the hypostatic union."²⁰

Bandas was not naïve about catechetical practice in the United States,

...the catechism text is read; then one word after the other is briefly explained; and then the text is repeated; over and over until the children become fully familiarized with the terms. The whole chapter, which is handled and explained in this way, must be memorized at home. In the next lesson it is repeated word for word. If the child fails to answer immediately, he is prompted by the first word. Such a method will in most instances fill the children with disgust for religion. It lays too much emphasis on the dead letter. Sentences so painfully hammered into children will soon be forgotten. The unassimilated abstract formulas, instead of promoting religious life, will become nonfunctional memory loads and dead accumulations and will soon be expelled from the mind.²¹

Bandas was not alone in his criticism of such a methodology. He sought renewal modeled on the pedagogy of God and Jesus the Divine Teacher. He was certain that doctrine had its source in God. Jesus, both in his humanity and divinity, was the ultimate mediator of that revelation. Bandas' position was consistent with the Church's understanding of the sources of doctrine which has been noted in previous chapters.

¹⁸ Ibid. 126.

¹⁹ GCD, 12.

²⁰ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 126. Because "human nature was assumed, not absorbed,' in the mysterious union of the Incarnation, the Church was led over the course of centuries to confess the full reality of Christ's human soul, with its operations of intellect and will, and of his human body. In parallel fashion, she had to recall on each occasion that Christ's human nature belongs, as his own, to the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it. Everything that Christ is and does in this nature derives from 'one of the Trinity.' The Son of God therefore communicates to his humanity his own personal mode of existence in the Trinity. In his soul as in his body, Christ thus expresses humanly the divine ways of the Trinity" (CCC, 470).

²¹ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 147.

Bandas' explanation of Christ's knowledge was seen in Chapter III. In addition, "There was no progress in the number of truths known but only in the manner of knowing them."²² "The Teacher and Educator of all mankind knew all truths and ways of knowing and actually experienced the manner in which the human mind functions in acquiring truth. His method of imparting truths to the human mind, consequently, must necessarily excite our interest and reverent curiosity."²³

Paul VI observed, "During the Synod [on evangelization], the bishops very frequently referred to this truth: Jesus Himself, the Good News of God, was the very first and the greatest evangelizer; He was so through and through: to perfection and to the point of the sacrifice of His earthly life."²⁴ Since catechesis is a moment of evangelization, Jesus was the very first and greatest catechist.²⁵

Initially, Bandas analyses Jesus' teaching in relationship to the Old Testament, which "was to the Jews of our Lord's time the Book of books par excellence."²⁶ The characteristics of Jesus' use of the Old Testament include:

- a) preparing His listeners for the lesson or the truth which He is about to expound, such as a passage from the Old Testament;²⁷
- b) teaching the new in terms of the old finds its illustration in Jesus' claims concerning His divine mission,²⁸ which impressed "upon the minds of his hearers the dignity of his Person," and "heavy guilt of those who refused to accept His doctrine."²⁹
- c) it is illustrated most clearly in the Sermon on the Mount, wherein Jesus refers to an Old Testament teaching and then changes its emphasis by adding the phrase, "But I say to You."³⁰
- d) that the principles of assimilative correlation cannot be sufficiently stressed in contemporary catechetics, "for it is clear that isolated truths will turn out to be mere nonfunctional memory loads which impede rather than promote mental development."³¹

²² Ibid., 127.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ EN, 7.

²⁵ CT, 18.

²⁶ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization* 128.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 128-129.

³⁰ Ibid., 130. Bandas gives several examples of these phrases found in Matthew's Gospel, for example, "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say to you Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." Matthew 5:43,44 [Biblical translation used by Bandas]

³¹ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 130.

Bandas refers to Augustine's description of the relationship between the Old and New Testament, which would be cited by *DV*. "God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and that the Old be made manifest in the New."³² Jesus engrafted the New Testament on the Old, and explained the former in terms of the latter; he emphasized the Christocentric nature of the Old Testament.³³ Like Jungmann, Bandas looks at the Emmaus event which encapsulates this reality. "Their minds were illuminated by faith and their hearts inflamed with love while Christ conversed with them."³⁴

Jesus often used a lecture approach, but also used demonstration. He desired to move both the minds and the wills of the hearers; he announced truths that could not be grasped by reason alone; his narrative "was best adapted to the nature and disposition of His listeners."³⁵ While he demonstrated a special love for children, his main form of teaching was to adults. He used narration in order to teach, but "it did not mean that the listener was to remain wholly passive."³⁶ By asking them questions, he evoked their cooperation. "By the questioning processes such as these Our Lord stimulated his listeners to serious thought and reflection and enabled them to arrive at conclusions which-because they were attained with the help of their own reasoning-became permanently effective in their lives."³⁷

John Paul wrote "Accordingly, the whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching: His silences, His miracles, His gestures, His prayer, His love for people, His special affection for the little and the poor, His acceptance of the total sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of the world, and His resurrection are the actualization of His word and the fulfillment of revelation."³⁸ Bandas stated, "Our Lord combined all teaching modes in a wonderful harmony. Frequently he supplemented a parable or a comparison with a question and elicited an answer which clarified his teaching and impressed the truth deeply upon the mind and heart."³⁹

³² *DV*, 16; St. Augustine, *Quest. in hept.* 2, 73.

³³ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 131.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 131-132.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

³⁸ *CT*, 9.

³⁹ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 134.

The *GDC* remained faithful to this understanding of Christ.

Jesus Christ is “the Teacher who reveals God to Man and Man to himself, the Teacher who saves, sanctifies and guides. He is the Teacher who lives, who speaks, rouses, moves, redresses, judges, forgives and walks with us day by day on the path of history. He is also the Teacher who comes and will come in glory.” In Jesus Christ, Lord and Teacher, the Church finds transcendent grace, permanent inspiration and the convincing model for all communication of the faith.⁴⁰

Bandas observed,

Whenever Our Lord dealt with men who had reached a certain maturity, he employed a dialogue form of instruction. This procedure permitted the listener to make observations, raise objections, ask questions and speak with a certain independence...It was his favorite procedure with the Apostles, as the latter’s eagerness, earnestness and many questions clearly show...through the dialogue form of instruction-so carefully directed by the divine Master - the independence of the apostles as future teachers was gradually developed.⁴¹

DV noted the dialogue between God and man in his self-revelation, culminating in the essential revelation/response of faith made possible through the Incarnation. After Vatican II the word “dialogue” became ubiquitous, especially with regard to catechesis. Unlike Jesus’ approach, it was often open ended, never arriving at any conclusion, let alone truth.

Bandas observations regarding Jesus pedagogy is similar to the *GCD*’s characterization of 20th century catechesis.

The act of catechesis has been investigated in all its parts according to the principles which govern the art of teaching (experience, imagination, memory, intelligence); and finally, a differential methodology has been worked out, that is, a methodology which varies according to the age, social conditions, and degree of psychological maturity of those who are to be taught.⁴²

He noted that, “In directing men’s minds to the invisible things of God, Christ used examples and comparisons from the visible things of nature and daily life- from facts that were intelligible to both adult and child.”⁴³ This observation culminates in his

⁴⁰ *GDC*, 137.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 136-37.

⁴² *GCD*, 70.

⁴³ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 138.

belief that “images must be derived from the circle of the hearer’s daily and immediate experiences - remains perennially valid in all catechization.”⁴⁴

Experience remains one of the most controversial topics in post-conciliar catechesis.⁴⁵

The GCD did not reject experience; instead it describes its authentic function:

- a) Experience begets concerns and questionings, hopes and anxieties, reflections and judgments; these merge and there results a certain desire to steer the human way of life...catechesis should be concerned with making men attentive to their more significant experiences...it also has the duty of placing under the light of the Gospel the questions which arise from those experiences, so that there may be stimulated within men a right desire to transform their ways of life. In this fashion, experience also makes men respond in an active way to the gift of God.
- b) Experience can also help make the Christian message more intelligible. Christ himself preached the kingdom of God by illustrating its nature with parables drawn from the experience of human life... Thus it is that experience serves in the examination and acceptance of the truths which are contained in the deposit of revelation.
- c) Experience, considered in itself, must be illumined by the light of revelation. By recalling to mind the action of God who works our salvation, catechesis should help men to explore, interpret, and judge their own experiences, and also to ascribe a Christian meaning to their own existence.⁴⁶

Bandas looks at Jesus’ words *and* deeds. Like *DV*, the *GCD* reiterated that, “The ministry of the word should proclaim these deeds and words in such a way that the loftiest mysteries contained in them are further explained and communicated by it.”⁴⁷

To do so, Jesus used another “technique” besides the parables. The *Catechism*

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ In October, 2002 the International Catechetical Congress (COINCAT) was held in Rome to mark the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I participated in the meeting. During sessions of the English-speaking groups (The work of the English-speaking group at the 1971 COINCAT was discussed in Chapter 1), the place of experience over content in catechesis was still being argued by a small number of participants. The American delegation did not support this position. Members of this group included Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, Archbishop William Levada, Bishop Donald Wuerl (made Archbishop of Washington, DC in May, 2006). The formal interventions of the English-speaking group did not refer to experience at all. Instead the interventions were concerned mainly with better use of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and a desire for a compendium of the *Catechism*. “The *Compendium* had been fervently desired by the participants in the International Catechetical Congress of October 2002, which gave voice to a need widely felt by the Church.” Benedict XVI, June 28, 2005, *Motu Proprio* for the approval and publication of the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

⁴⁶ *GCD*, 74.

“supplied immediate evidence, reached efficaciously the understanding, and stimulated religious faith, namely, the miracle.”⁴⁸

Miracles “...attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him. To those who turn to him in faith, he grants what they ask. So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father’s works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God.”⁴⁹ It continues, “Thus the miracles of Christ and the saints, prophecies, the Church’s growth and holiness, and her fruitfulness and stability ‘are the most certain signs of divine Revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all’; they are ‘motives of credibility’ (*motiva credibilitatis*), which show that the assent of faith is ‘by no means a blind impulse of the mind.’”⁵⁰

Bandas noted that Jesus taught “slowly and gradually, after the manner of the true pedagogue.”⁵¹ This was the manner in which God revealed himself, as *DV* recalled. The *GDC* urged, “Catechesis...’must take diligent care faithfully to present the entire treasure of the Christian message.’ This is accomplished, gradually, by following the example of the divine pedagogy with which God revealed himself progressively and gradually.”⁵²

Bandas asserted, “...the catechetical principles of Our Lord cannot stand in contradiction to genuine didactic methods.”⁵³ This was implicit in the *GCD*. It was explicit in the *GDC* which discussed methodology in the context of the divine pedagogy.⁵⁴ Bandas had written,

When modern educators propound certain pedagogic principles as the discoveries of contemporary educational psychology and insist that catechetical methodology be brought into harmony with them, they seem to forget that these very perennial laws were enunciated or at least insinuated almost two thousand years ago by the great Teacher and Educator of mankind.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁸ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 148.

⁴⁹ CCC, 548.

⁵⁰ CCC, 156; *Dei Filius* 3.

⁵¹ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 140.

⁵² *GDC*, 112.

⁵³ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 139.

⁵⁴ *GDC*, 137-60.

⁵⁵ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 139.

In conclusion, the magisterial documents testify to the veracity of Bandas' observations.

There is also a pedagogy of faith, and the good that it can do for catechesis cannot be overstated. In fact, it is natural that techniques perfected and tested for education in general should be adapted for the service of education in the faith. However, account must always be taken of the absolute originality of faith. Pedagogy of faith is not a question of transmitting human knowledge, even of the highest kind; it is a question of communicating God's revelation in its entirety. Throughout sacred history, especially in the Gospel, God Himself used a pedagogy that must continue to be a model for the pedagogy of faith. A technique is of value in catechesis only to the extent that it serves the faith that is to be transmitted and learned; otherwise it is of no value.⁵⁶

St. Paul

The Gospels recount the rudimentary efforts of the apostles to hand on the faith. Jesus gave them the mandate to teach and make disciples (Mt.18:19-10). Despite this the Apostles huddled in fear after the Ascension. They needed Pentecost, when "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim" (Acts 2:4). Jesus' commission "was faithfully fulfilled by the Apostles who, by their oral preaching, by example, and by observances handed on what they had received from the lips of Christ, from living with Him, and from what He did, or what they had learned through the prompting of the Holy Spirit."⁵⁷

Very little is known about individual Apostles. Generally, their place of ministry and martyrdom is known. John died in old age. There are no accounts of how they spread the Good News. Matthew and John each wrote a Gospel. Letters of Peter, James, John, and Jude are included in the canon of Scripture. The Acts of the Apostles contain accounts of the work of Peter and especially Paul.

Nonetheless, "the apostles, by preaching the Gospel everywhere, and it being accepted by their hearers under the influence of the Holy Spirit, gather together the universal Church, which the Lord established on the apostles and built upon blessed Peter, their

⁵⁶ *CT*, 58.

⁵⁷ *DV*, 7.

chief, Christ Jesus Himself being the supreme cornerstone who Jesus left as the visible head of the Church.”⁵⁸

“If we would like an idea of the teaching method employed by the first generation of Christians, we cannot do better than to turn to St. Paul.”⁵⁹ Jungmann believed that “it is Paul who surpasses the other witnesses of the primitive Church in the power of expression...the predilection for seeing and depicting the Church, grace and salvation from the viewpoint of Christ.”⁶⁰

John Paul wanted to be like Paul and Augustine,

I would like my words...to set your hearts aflame, like the letters of St. Paul to his companions in the Gospel, Titus and Timothy, or like St. Augustine writing for the deacon Deogratias, when the latter lost heart before his task as a catechist, a real little treatise on the joy of catechizing. Yes, I wish to sow courage, hope and enthusiasm abundantly in the hearts of all those many diverse people who are in charge of religious instruction and training for life in keeping with the Gospel.⁶¹

“Methodology is by its very nature nothing other than careful consideration of means that have stood the test of experience. Therefore, more importance is to be attributed to practical exercises than to theoretical instruction on pedagogy.”⁶² Paul and Augustine demonstrate this.

No catechetical or theological discussion of Jesus can be done without reference to the letters of St. Paul, although Moran attempted it. Paul’s concept of the “mystery of Christ” has been seen previously.

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3:7-10).

⁵⁸ LG, 19.

⁵⁹ Jungmann, *The Good News, Yesterday and Today*, 17.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁶¹ CT, 62.

The passage illustrates Paul's love for the Gospel, his divine call to preach to the Gentiles the mystery of Christ, his humble yet audacious service to the Gospel, and his desire for the salvation of those to whom he preaches despite suffering.

Paul continued,

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

It can be noted that Moran's approach to religious education does not share in this attitude.

Paul zealously protected Judaism from the teaching of Jesus. "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders bear me witness" (Acts 22:4-5). He went so far as to participate in the stoning to death of Christianity's protomartyr, Stephen.⁶³ "In one supernatural flash the thoughts and affections of the pitiless persecutor were brought into loving subjection unto Him whom it was Saul's most passionate desire and most active purpose to destroy."⁶⁴

Paul's conversion is well known. "And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He was stuck blind. The Lord Jesus sent Ananias to Paul "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."⁶⁵ "And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus...has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'...Then he rose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened."⁶⁶ Dramatically, Paul personifies the aims of catechesis – understanding and conversion for insertion into the mystery of Christ, with the final

⁶² GCD, 112.

⁶³ See Acts of the Apostles, 7.

⁶⁴ Bendas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 180.

⁶⁵ Acts 9:15-16

goal of communion, of intimacy with him.⁶⁷ “And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, “He is the Son of God.”⁶⁸ Paul’s conversion is the only one commemorated outright by the Church, celebrated on January 25.

Paul’s knowledge of the faith came directly from Jesus: “the gospel which was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁹ He thought himself “the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because” he said, “I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain.”⁷⁰

Paul made four missionary trips, culminating in his arrival in Rome, where he was imprisoned and finally executed by beheading in 65 A.D. He founded churches throughout Mediterranean region and afterwards he sent letters to reassure them, clarify doctrine, praise or chastise. He could be charming, bold, or angry. He always loved. “The powers which formerly were used for destruction will now be used for edification. As formerly he execrated the name of Christ so now he says anathema to anyone who does not love Our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁷¹ The lofty Pauline ideal must always be the guiding norm of the Christian catechist.”⁷²

Bandas constructs a profile of the catechist, which reflects the life and teaching of Paul (2 Cor. 5:20).

Christian teachers are ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the heavenly mysteries. They are the ambassadors of Christ, God as it were exhorting by their mouths. They have the honor of collaborating in the spread of the Gospel in virtue of a divine power. Their office is derived not from men but from God through Jesus Christ. They are the depositories of a divine doctrine which they must preserve unaltered.⁷³

This could seem either triumphalistic or untenable, but it is rooted in baptism.

⁶⁶ Acts 9:17-19

⁶⁷ See *CT*, 5 and 20.

⁶⁸ Acts 9:20

⁶⁹ Gal 1:11-12

⁷⁰ 1Cor. 15:9

⁷¹ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 181.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Incorporation into Christ through faith and Baptism is the source of being a Christian in the mystery of the Church. This mystery constitutes the Christian's most basic "features" and serves as the basis for all the vocations and dynamism of the Christian life of the lay faithful (cf. Jn 3:5). In Christ who died and rose from the dead, the baptized become a "new creation" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17), washed clean from sin and brought to life through grace.⁷⁴

Leo the Great urged: "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."⁷⁵

This call to holiness is "rooted in Baptism and proposed anew in the other Sacraments, principally in the Eucharist."⁷⁶ Subsequently, they "have the ability to manifest this holiness and the responsibility to bear witness to it in all that they do. The Apostle Paul never tires of admonishing all Christians to live 'as is fitting among saints' (Eph 5:3)."⁷⁷ Bandas felt that the divine vocation of the catechist "must be the law of his moral attitude, the first rule of his thoughts and discourses, the basis of all his activity. It must arouse in him the sentiments of duty and dignity and counteract the ennui of daily routine."⁷⁸

His thinking was reiterated by *Guide for Catechists*.

At the origin of the catechist's vocation, therefore, apart from the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, there is a specific call from the Holy Spirit, a "*special charism recognized by the Church*" and made explicit by the Bishop's mandate. It is important for the catechist candidate to recognize the supernatural and ecclesial significance of this call, so as to be able to respond, like the Son of God, "*Here I come*" (Heb 10:7), or, like the prophet, "*Here I am, send me*" (Is 6:8).⁷⁹

"The personal fervor of the catechist plays a very important role in impressing religious truths upon the minds and hearts of his listeners."⁸⁰ The *GCD* concurred, "For outstanding human and Christian qualities in the catechists will be able to do

⁷⁴ *Christifideles laici*, 9.

⁷⁵ CCC, 1691, St. Leo the Great, *Sermo 22 in nat. Dom.*, 3, cited in CCC 1691.

⁷⁶ *Christifideles laici*, 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁸ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 182.

⁷⁹ Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, "Guide for Catechists," 2.

⁸⁰ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 185.

more to produce successes than will the methods selected. The work of the catechist must be considered of greater importance than the selection of texts and other tools (cf. *AG*, 17).⁸¹

The *GCD* states, “The profound reflections found in St. Paul (cf. Rom. 5) concerning the reality of sin and Christ’s consequent “work of justice” must be numbered among the principal points of the Christian faith, and it is not right to pass over them in silence in catechesis.”⁸² Therefore, as it stated later, catechizing is to be “in complete harmony with the economy of revelation and salvation.”⁸³ This invites a response that “is in harmony with the general condition of the Christian life in which the faithful actively respond to God’s gifts through prayers, through participation in the sacraments and the sacred Liturgy, through acceptance of responsibilities in the Church and in social life, and through the practice of charity.”⁸⁴

Paul wrote, “Night and day we pray beyond measure to see you in person and to remedy the deficiencies of your faith.”⁸⁵ To rectify the deficiencies in textbooks, the American bishops mandated conformity to the *Catechism*, in which St. Paul is directly quoted over 360 times. Many of those passages were used more than once or paraphrased. In the *GCD*, *EN* and *CT*, Paul’s words and deeds reveals that he is the example, *par excellence*, of a catechist who modeled himself on Christ and his pedagogy.

Paschal Mystery

St. Paul always focused on the cross of Christ. “He made his hearers believe that they were present at the cross...Paul’s compulsion to replicate the crucifixion is explicable only if it made an impact on him.”⁸⁶ “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”⁸⁷

⁸¹ *GCD*, 71.

⁸² *GCD*, 62.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *GCD*, 75.

⁸⁵ 1 Thes. 3:10

⁸⁶ Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: His Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 34.

⁸⁷ 1 Cor. 1:17-18.

What ramification does this have for catechetical methodology? “Hence for Christians the crucifix is one of the most sublime and popular images of Christ the Teacher.”⁸⁸ Paul claimed, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”⁸⁹

For Paul, the crucified Christ was also the risen Christ: “if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”⁹⁰ Paul gives this account before the Roman governor Felix in Caesarea.⁹¹ “Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, except this one thing which I cried out while standing among them, ‘With respect to the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you this day.’”⁹²

Imitator of Christ

God revealed himself to Paul, and allowed him to see Jesus and hear his voice. He called him to “be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard.”⁹³

Authentic catechesis demands the necessity of witness from the catechist and the ecclesial community. Man meets Christ in these witnesses.⁹⁴ Paul VI stressed,

...the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal...It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the

⁸⁸ *CT*, 9.

⁸⁹ Gal. 2: 19-20

⁹⁰ 1 Cor.15:14

⁹¹ Paul was arrested in Jerusalem at the instigation of the High Priest Ananias, and brought before the Jewish Council. A heated debate took place between members of the two major sects of Judaism, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. “But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, ‘Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial.’ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. Then a great clamor arose; and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ party stood up and contended, ‘We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?’ And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them and bring him into the barracks. The following night the Lord stood by him and said, ‘Take courage, for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also at Rome.’ When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There were more than forty who made this conspiracy” (Acts 23:6-12). In the end the Roman tribune intervened to save Paul’s life, and Paul eventually was taken to Felix under a protective detachment of Roman soldiers.

⁹² Acts 24:14-21

⁹³ Acts 22:15

⁹⁴ *GCD* 35.

world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus-the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity.⁹⁵

Paul carried this out by imitating Christ. Paul's glory was "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."⁹⁶ He urged them, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."⁹⁷ "Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ."⁹⁸ There was a price to be paid. "Catechists, therefore, have the duty not only to impart catechesis directly, but also to offer their help in making the ecclesial community come alive, so that it will be able to give a witness that is authentically Christian."⁹⁹ "And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit; so that you became an example to all the believers."¹⁰⁰ "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong."¹⁰¹

Paul's Methodology

Paul wrote three types of letters: to the Romans, which is a letter of introduction to an existing Church; letters to Timothy and Titus, young bishops whom Paul is mentoring; the remainder to churches that he had established. Because the letters were written to specific groups to meet their needs, there is no systematic catechesis in which a creed is presented and explained. Paul's catechesis was initial catechesis. The Bangkok Study Week desired that catechesis become more anthropocentric in the catechumenate, to be more attuned to the person. Paul's work with these early converts was indeed personal, but was vigorously Christocentric. Benedict XVI wrote,

Thus, the apostles' adventure began as a gathering of persons who open to one another reciprocally. A direct knowledge of the Teacher began for the

⁹⁵ *EN*, 41.

⁹⁶ Gal. 6:15

⁹⁷ 1 Cor. 11:1

⁹⁸ Phil 3:17-18

⁹⁹ *GCD*, 35.

¹⁰⁰ 1 Thes, 2:6-8

¹⁰¹ 2 Cor. 12: 8-10

disciples. They saw where he lived and began to know him. They would not have to be heralds of an idea, but witnesses of a person. Before being sent to evangelize, they would have to “be” with Jesus (cf. Mark 3:14), establishing a personal relationship with him. With this foundation, evangelization is no more than a proclamation of what has been experienced and an invitation to enter into the mystery of communion with Christ (cf. 1 John 13).¹⁰²

Paul VI meditated on Paul’s words: “With such yearning love we chose to impart to you not only the gospel of God but our very selves, so dear had you become to us”¹⁰³. He asked,

What is this love? It is much more than that of a teacher; it is the love of a father; and again, it is the love of a mother. It is this love that the Lord expects from every preacher of the Gospel, from every builder of the Church. A sign of love will be the concern to give the truth and to bring people into unity. Another sign of love will be a devotion to the proclamation of Jesus Christ, without reservation or turning back.¹⁰⁴

Bandas identified Paul’s passion: “a high-mindedness without pride and a devotion without reserve. Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel but preaches it with a bold and proud enthusiasm.”¹⁰⁵ Paul’s “boasting” included the fact that he became all things to all people, “that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”¹⁰⁶

His letters to his neophyte churches demonstrate his knowledge of their unique situation, and his love for them, not only for their own sakes but for the sake of their union with Christ. The salvific work of Christ was vital to Paul’s preaching. “For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with him.”¹⁰⁷ Salvation was on-going. “So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”¹⁰⁸ He was sent to the Gentiles, yet he wished “that I myself

¹⁰² Address to the International Theological Commission, December 19, 2005. www.zenit.org.

¹⁰³ 1 Thes. 2:8

¹⁰⁴ *EN*, 79.

¹⁰⁵ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 182.

¹⁰⁶ 1 Cor. 9:19-23

¹⁰⁷ 1Thes 5:9-10

¹⁰⁸ 2 Cor. 5:16-21.

were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race.”¹⁰⁹

He proclaimed Christ’s Paschal mystery within the context of salvation history. Paul recites Jewish history from their sojourn in the desert to the kingship of David and states “Of this man’s posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised”¹¹⁰ In Galatians, he links Christ directly to Abraham: “Recognition of the importance of the faith/fidelity of Abraham led Paul to think of the faith/fidelity of Christ, which is both the cause and exemplar of the faith/fidelity of believers to the point where the two are identified...The insight was a radical breakthrough in Paul’s understanding of the relationship between Christ and his followers.”¹¹¹

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned-- sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.¹¹²

It is obvious from his letters that Paul was soaked in the Scriptures.¹¹³ He also makes reference to Tradition. “Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours.”¹¹⁴ “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold fast to the traditions, just as I handed them on to you.”¹¹⁵

Paul’s Catechesis of Love

“When we consider these mysteries of Jesus, which of His perfections do we see especially shine out? It is love...It is necessary that our faith in this love of Jesus Christ should be living and constant. And why? Because it is one of the most

¹⁰⁹ Romans 9:3

¹¹⁰ Acts 13:23

¹¹¹ Murphy-O’Connor, Paul: His Story, 136-37.

¹¹² Romans 5:12-14.

¹¹³ Acts 22:3, Pauline scholar Jerome Murphy-O’Connor writes, “As regards Paul’s religious education, he knew the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures very well. He quotes it almost ninety times, and there are many other allusions and echoes in his letters. The way that he handles the sacred writings of his people betrays the profound familiarity that results from frequent contact. It must have been a feature of his home life that was reinforced by attendance at the synagogue” (*Paul: His Story*, 4).

¹¹⁴ 1 Thes. 2:15

¹¹⁵ 1 Cor. 11:1.

powerful supports of our fidelity.”¹¹⁶ The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the “*new commandment*” of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us.¹¹⁷ Jesus’ last admonitions concern love. “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love... This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”¹¹⁸ Paul encouraged his listeners, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”¹¹⁹

Why did Paul press on, despite rejection and suffering? “He will reply ‘Because of Him Who hath loved us.’ What sustains, strengthens, animates and stimulates him is the deep conviction of the love that Christ bears toward him.”¹²⁰ “For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.”¹²¹

In revelation, “God appears there as one who wishes to communicate himself, carrying out a plan which proceeds from love. Catechesis, then, ought to take its beginning from this gift of divine love.”¹²² Consequently, “Instructed by faith, man, through the gift of the Spirit, comes to contemplate and savor the God of love, the God who has made known the riches of his glory in Christ (cf. Col. 1, 26).”¹²³ Revelation and the response of faith are rooted in love. Therefore “The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends.”¹²⁴

Bandas summarized Paul’s warnings.

Subtleties and uncertain novelties are rarely conducive to a good life:
‘But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and
strivings about the law. For they are unprofitable and vain’ (Tit 3:9).
Still less should purely secular subjects be drawn into holy discourses (2

¹¹⁶ Dom Columba Marmion, OSB, *Christ in His Mysteries* (London: Sands and Co. Publishers, Ltd., 1939), 362.

¹¹⁷ CCC, 1970.

¹¹⁸ John 15:9-12

¹¹⁹ Eph. 5:1

¹²⁰ Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*, 364.

¹²¹ 2 Cor. 2:4

¹²² GCD 10; DV, 2.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ CCC, 25; *Roman Catechism*, Preface.

Tm 2:16). All questions debated in theological circles should be avoided; the faithful should not be drawn into disputes in which there is mostly question of things that are uncertain and cannot be proved.¹²⁵

At the end of his life, Paul was certain of his victory in Jesus Christ,

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”¹²⁶

St. Augustine

It was noted earlier, John Paul desired to imitate Augustine. Later he wrote, “I too have added my voice to those of my predecessors, when I expressed my strong desire ‘that his philosophical, theological and spiritual doctrine be studied and spread, so that he may continue . . . his teaching in the Church, a humble but at the same time enlightened teaching which speaks above all of Christ and love.’”¹²⁷

Kevane concluded that Augustine’s devotion to the Apostles Creed makes him, “the living paradigm in the Church of the Fathers for the kind of leadership in the People of God today on the part of bishops, priests and deacons who will actually renew the Catechumenate in its substance according to the call of the Second Vatican Council.”¹²⁸

DV paraphrased Augustine, “...this present council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine on divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the message

¹²⁵ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 193.

¹²⁶ 2 Tim. 4:6-8.

¹²⁷ John Paul II, *Augustinum Hipponensem*, August 26, 1986: In a similar fashion, other Roman Pontiffs have proposed the example of his way of life and the writings that embody his teachings as an object of contemplation and imitation, and very many Councils have often drawn copiously from his writings. Pope Leo XIII praised his philosophical teachings in the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*; later, Pius XI made a brief synthesis of his virtues and teachings in the Encyclical *Ad salutem humani generis*, declaring that, of those who have flourished from the beginnings of the human race down to our own days, none—or, at most, very few could rank with Augustine, for the very great acuteness of his genius, for the richness and sublimity of his teachings, and finally for his holiness of life and defense of Catholic truth. Paul VI later affirmed: “Indeed, over and above the shining example he gives of the qualities common to all the Fathers, it may be said that all the thought-currents of the past meet in his works and form the source which provides the whole doctrinal tradition of succeeding ages.” The *Catechism* quotes him over one hundred times, more than any other non-biblical source.

¹²⁸ Kevane, *Catechesis in Augustine*, 45.

of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love.¹²⁹ The original passage reads, “With this love then, set before you as an end to which you may refer all that you say, so give all your instructions that he to whom you speak by hearing may believe, and by believing may hope, and by hoping, may love.”¹³⁰

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) is considered one of the greatest theologians of the Church. “Periods of renewal in the Church are also intense moments of catechesis. ‘In the great era of the Fathers of the Church, saintly bishops devoted an important part of their ministry to catechesis. St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, and many other Fathers wrote catechetical works that remain models for us.”¹³¹ “Some of the most impressive Bishops and pastors, especially in the third and fourth centuries considered it an important part of their episcopal ministry to deliver catechetical instructions and write treatises.”¹³² For Kevane, the fathers were important for catechesis because of their “keen recognition of the divine origin of the teaching program conducted by the bishops, priests, and deacons of the Early Church. This recognition shines through the catechetical activity of St. Augustine.”¹³³

Marmion thought thus of Augustine: “A great genius, the greatest perhaps that the world has known, a man who had passed his youth in sin, who had emptied the cup of pleasure, whose mind was attracted by all the errors of His time, Augustine, overcome by grace, was converted and reached the highest sanctity.”¹³⁴

On his quest for truth Augustine went from North Africa to Rome to Milan. He heard the words, “*Tolle lege*” – “Take and read.” He read: “Let us then throw off the works of darkness (and) put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and

¹²⁹ *DV I* St. Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* 4, 8: PL. 40, 316.

¹³⁰ St. Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* 4, 8.

¹³¹ CCC, 8.

¹³² CT, 12.

¹³³ Kevane, *Catechesis in Augustine*, 2.

¹³⁴ Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*, 398. He was brilliant; he had been a member of the Manichee sect, which considered matter evil; he had a son by his mistress; he disdained the Old Testament because he thought it poorly written

licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.”¹³⁵ He was baptized by St. Ambrose on Easter Sunday, 387 AD. “The conversion of St. Augustine, an event totally dominated by the need to find the truth, has much to teach the men and women of today, who are so often mistaken about the greatest question of all life.”¹³⁶ St. Paul had been one of the instruments of his conversion.

Augustine returned to North Africa and was ordained a priest. He confessed his inadequacy in conducting his own catechumenate to his bishop.

You think me qualified, whilst I know myself better; and yet I would not have come to know myself if I had not learned by experience...I may venture to say that I know and unreservedly believe the doctrines pertaining to our salvation. But my difficulty is in the question of how I am to use this truth in ministering to the salvation of others. How can this be done, except, as the Lord Himself tells us, by asking, seeking, knocking, that is by praying, reading, and weeping?¹³⁷

Kevane mused, “For would Augustine have become St. Augustine without his personal pastoral activity in the Catechumenate?”¹³⁸ The emphasis on the “personal” is an essential element of catechesis because it is an essential element in revelation, “God chose to reveal himself.”¹³⁹ God became man so that he could be experienced in a personal way, “We announce to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we announce to you, so that you may have fellowship with us and our common fellowship be with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.”¹⁴⁰ Catechesis therefore, must be personal, “No method, not even one much proved in use, frees the catechist from the personal task of assimilating and passing judgment on the concrete circumstances, and from some adjustment to them.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Romans 13:12-14

¹³⁶ John Paul II, *Augustinum Hipponesem*, I.

¹³⁷ Kevane, *Catechesis in Augustine*, 12, Kevane quotes a letter (ep. 21) from Augustine to his bishop Valerius, see *Letters of St. Augustine*, trans. J.G. Cunningham (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872), 16-50.

¹³⁸ Kevane, *Catechesis in Augustine*, 10.

¹³⁹ *DV*, 2.

¹⁴⁰ 1 John 1:2-3, quoted in *DV* 1.

¹⁴¹ *GCD*, 71.

The deacon Deogratias, struggling with his catechumenate, sought Augustine's help. His response is the first complete manual of catechetical methodology.¹⁴² *De*

Catechizandis Rudibus is Augustine's response to Deogratias.¹⁴³ He wrote,

...you almost always find yourself in a difficulty as to the manner in which a suitable declaration is to be made of the precise doctrine, the belief of which constitutes us Christians: regarding the point at which our statement of the same ought to commence, and the limit to which it should be allowed to proceed: and with respect to the question whether, when our narration is concluded, we ought to make use of any kind of exhortation, or simply specify those precepts in the observance of which the person to whom we are discoursing may know the Christian life and profession to be maintained.¹⁴⁴

Augustine realized "that in the course of a lengthened and languid address you have become profitless and distasteful even to yourself, not to speak of the learner whom you have been endeavoring to instruct by your utterance, and the other parties who have been present as hearers"¹⁴⁵ Augustine continued, "you have been constrained by these straits to put upon me the constraint of that love which I owe to you, so that I may not feel it a burdensome thing among all my engagements to write you something on this subject."¹⁴⁶ It is the "constraint of love" that captures the essence of both Augustine's desire to care for this catechist, and of the methodology that he will describe in the remainder of the text.

As for myself then, if, in the exercise of those capacities which through the bounty of our Lord I am enabled to present, the same Lord requires me to offer any manner of aid to those whom He has made brethren to me, I feel constrained not only by that love and service which is due from me to you on the terms of familiar friendship, but also by that which I owe universally to my mother the Church, by no means to refuse the task, but rather to take it up with a prompt and devoted willingness.¹⁴⁷

Augustine describes his duty,

For the more extensively I desire to see the treasure of the Lord distributed, the more does it become my duty, if I ascertain that the stewards, who are my

¹⁴² Cyril of Jerusalem has been referred to as "Father of Catechetics." His catechumenal homilies are extant, and serve as a model of the presentation of the Christian faith, and his pastoral care for his catechumens, but he does not include a methodology to be employed in the process.

¹⁴³ *De catechizandis rudibus* is translated *The First Catechetical Instruction*. The "rude" was someone not yet instructed. The treatise is also referred to as *On Instructing the Unlearned*.

¹⁴⁴ Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 1.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Bendas wrote, "The catechist and teacher who becomes weary and discouraged because of the dullness, ignorance, indifference and ingratitude of his pupils and listeners will find a solution for many of his difficulties in the doctrine and life of St. Paul" (*Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 185).

¹⁴⁶ Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 1.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.

fellow-servants, find any difficulty in laying it out, to do all that lies in my power to the end that they may be able to accomplish easily and expeditiously what they sedulously and earnestly aim at.¹⁴⁸

Augustine was “familiar with the methods employed in Africa and had attended catechetical lectures both at Rome and at Milan.”¹⁴⁹

The treatise enunciates the following important educational principles: not to confuse the candidate with too much matter; to explain a little, clearly and concisely; to have but one central theme—the love of God; to give as far as possible individual instruction; to look at the candidate’s bodily comfort; to adapt the instruction to the candidate’s intelligence; to keep up interest, cultivate cheerfulness, and combat weariness.¹⁵⁰

Augustine frequently uses John’s Gospel and Paul’s letters in support of his counsel of love.

Moreover, what greater reason is apparent for the advent of the Lord than that God might show His love in us, commending it powerfully, inasmuch as ‘while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us’? And furthermore, this is with the intent that, inasmuch as charity is ‘the end of the commandment’, and ‘the fulfilling of the law’, we also may love one another and lay down our life for the brethren, even as He laid down His life for us. And with regard to God Himself, its object is that, even if it were an irksome task to love Him, it may now at least cease to be irksome for us to return His love, seeing that ‘He first loved us,’ and ‘spared not His own only Son, but delivered Him up for us all.’¹⁵¹

Later Augustine says, “it happens at once that the soul which before was torpid is excited so soon as it feels itself to be loved, and that the soul which was enkindled already becomes the more inflamed so soon as it is made cognizant of the return of its own love.”¹⁵²

Augustine’s correction of a person’s doctrinal errors consisted in “reproving him with more than usual kindness and gentleness.” He cautions Deogratias to teach the person gently, for he is

uninstructed and ignorant, by pointing out and commending, concisely and in a grave spirit the end of Christian doctrine in its genuine reality and by doing all this in such a manner as neither to anticipate the times of a narration, which

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization*, 208.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 7.

¹⁵² Ibid.

should be given subsequently, nor to venture to impose that kind of statement upon a mind not previously set for it, you may bring him to desire that which, either in mistake or in dissimulation, he has not been desiring up to this stage.¹⁵³

Augustine's Plan for Catechesis

Augustine relies on the narration of salvation history as the center-point for his catechesis, as Jungmann would do. The narration of salvation history "ought to be like the gold which binds together a row of gems, and yet does not interfere with the choice symmetry of the ornament by any undue intrusion of itself."¹⁵⁴ He moves toward the resurrection, and the "last things: the end to which man is directed: death, judgment, heaven, as much as they are able to handle."¹⁵⁵

He insisted on knowing his audience, which remains a key requirement in catechetical methodology. Augustine recommends that for those who had a basic knowledge of the tenets of Christianity and the Scriptures, "a brief method of procedure should be adopted with these, so as not to inculcate on them, in an odious fashion, things which they know already, but to pass over these with a light and modest touch."¹⁵⁶ He utilizes their knowledge of literature, Christian or not, in proclaiming the message. If the educated person had been influenced by heretical texts and "has retained in his mind anything which the true faith condemns, and yet supposes it to be catholic doctrine, then we must set ourselves sedulously to teach him, bringing before him (in its rightful superiority) the authority of the Church universal, and of other most learned men reputed both for their disputations and for their writings in (the cause of) its truth."¹⁵⁷

The source of Deogratias' difficulties was "not so much from want of matter to say...as rather from weariness of mind."¹⁵⁸ To be successful, Augustine determines the frame of mind necessary for all catechists in order to be "successful" in handing on the faith. "The more we love those to whom we discourse, the more desirous are

¹⁵³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 11. The American Bishops determined that the teaching on this topic was deficient in catechetical texts.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 12.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

we that they should be pleased with the matters which are held forth for their salvation: so that if we do not succeed in this, we are pained, and we are weakened, and become broken-spirited in the midst of our course, as if we were wasting our efforts to no purpose.”¹⁵⁹ He also encouraged Deogratias to try to overcome whatever personal difficulties he is encountering so that his presentation of the faith will be done cheerfully.

The *GCD* exhorted, “in catechesis, therefore, one must stir up the activity of faith (of hope, too, and of charity); for correctness and vigor of judgment, which are to be stimulated by an active style of instruction, here help to bring about acceptance of the word of God.”¹⁶⁰ 1400 years later the *GCD*’s concerns were the same as those expressed by Augustine:

- Deogratias as a person: “For outstanding human and Christian qualities in the catechists will be able to do more to produce successes than will the methods selected.”¹⁶¹
- The task of the catechist: “The catechist is in a certain way the interpreter of the Church among those who are to be instructed.”¹⁶²
- The audience to which the catechesis is directed including the modes of catechesis which their educational level would determine. “In selecting a pedagogical method, one ought to take into account the circumstances in which the ecclesial community or the individuals among the faithful to whom the catechesis is directed live. From this there arises the need to use great diligence in looking into and finding ways and methods which better respond to the various circumstances.”¹⁶³
- The content of catechesis: “It is, consequently, the supreme and absolutely necessary function of the Church’s prophetic ministry to make the content of this message intelligible to men of all times, in order that they may be converted to God through Christ, that they may interpret their whole life in the light of faith, having considered the special conditions of events and times in which that life develops, and that they may lead a life in keeping with the dignity which the message of salvation has brought them and that faith has revealed to them.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ *GCD*, 75.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁶² Ibid., 34.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 37.

The Narratio

In the second half of the text, Augustine provides the points that should be included in the narration of salvation history. “For him the teaching of religion is primarily a story and the whole outline of the History of Salvation is to be given from the Creation to the Second Coming. But this story is of God’s marvelous deeds, and these are to show God’s love for us, in order to win our return of love for God.”¹⁶⁵

While doing this, he assists the catechumen in understanding how these persons and events pre-figure Christ, or how he is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He also demonstrates the events of the Old Testament that pre-figure the Church. “The principal purpose to which the plan of the old covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming of Christ, the redeemer of all and of the messianic kingdom, to announce this coming by prophecy (see Luke 24:44, John 5:39; 1 Peter 1:10), and to indicate its meaning through various types (see 1 Cor. 10:11).”¹⁶⁶ Augustine declared, “Wherefore, in the Old Testament there is a veiling of the New, and in the New Testament there is a revealing of the Old.”¹⁶⁷

Previously, the historical nature of catechesis, especially rooted in salvation history was seen as one of the norms or criteria of catechesis. In the *GDC*, this norm remains, and is stated more clearly. It is also linked to its emphasis on the pedagogy of God.

The ‘*economy of Salvation*’ has thus an historical character as it is realized in time: ‘...in time past it began, made progress, and in Christ reached its highest point; in the present time it displays its force and awaits its consummation in the future.’ For this reason, the Church, in transmitting today the Christian message, begins with the living awareness which she carries of it, has a constant “memory” of the saving events of the past and makes them known. In the light of these, she interprets the present events of human history, where the Spirit of God is continually renewing the face of the earth, and she awaits with faith for the Lord’s coming. In Patristic catechesis, the narration (*narratio*) of the wonderful deeds of God and the

¹⁶⁵ Derek Lance, *Till Christ be Formed, Teaching Religion as the History of Salvation* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1964), 117.

¹⁶⁶ *DV*, 15.

¹⁶⁷ Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* 8.

awaiting (*expectatio*) of Christ's return always accompanied the exposition of the mysteries of faith.¹⁶⁸

Jungmann and Hofinger were centered in salvation history, Moran rejected it, Groome disregards it. His desire to share the "story" becomes totally horizontal, focusing on personal experience.

Thomas Groome

Thomas Groome is one of the most prominent figures in American, Irish, and Australian catechetics. He has had the greatest impact in regard to method. Like Moran, Groome's work is controversial, but there has not been much effort to dissect it. His methodology, "Shared Christian Praxis," has had a great impact on religious education whether or not the practitioners were aware of the source.

Since 2003 he has been the Director of the Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College, where he has served for almost 30 years. He was born in Ireland. He received an MA in divinity from St. Patrick's Seminary, Carlow, and was ordained to the priesthood. He subsequently left the priesthood and married.¹⁶⁹ He received his MA from Fordham University and PhD from Union Theological Seminary/Columbia University. Groome was the primary author of several of Sadlier's textbook series, including *God With Us* (1984) and *Coming to Faith* (1990). He was active in founding The Voice of the Faithful, organized in the wake of the sexual-abuse scandal among priests in Boston.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ GDC, 107. The footnote reads, "The Fathers, basing the content of catechesis on the narration of the events of salvation, wished to root Christianity in time by showing that it was a salvation history and not a mere religious philosophy. They also wished to emphasize that Christ was the center of this history."

¹⁶⁹ When a priest is granted to permission to leave the practice of his priestly ministry he receives a rescript of laicization from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It lists what he can and cannot do, including: c) he may not discharge any function in seminaries or equivalent institutions. In other institutions of higher studies which are in any way whatever dependent upon ecclesiastical authority, he may not exercise the functions of director, or office of teaching; d) however, in those institutions of higher studies which are not dependent upon ecclesiastical authority, he may not teach any discipline which is properly theological or closely connected with the same. *Canon Law Digest*, vol. 9, pp. 99-101.

¹⁷⁰ *Voice of the Faithful* demanded the resignation of Boston's Archbishop, Cardinal Bernard Law because of his negligence in allowing priests who had committed acts of sexual abuse to remain in their ministry. Voice of the People supports a married clergy and women's ordination. "Clericalism needs to break down; the priesthood needs to break open...it must keep the issues of celibacy and the ordination of women on the table as well. The systematic changes needed will require the US Catholic bishops to find their own voice, to speak the truth that they know themselves and hear from the great majority of their people, to take back the church leadership from the right phalanx, representing only a

He received the 1983 F. Sadlier Dinger Award and NCCL's Catechetical Award in 1997. In 2000, he received the Emmaus Award for Excellence in Catechesis from The National Association of Parish and Catechetical Directors (NPCD).

His seminal work was *Christian Religious Education*, widely regarded as the most important and influential contemporary work on the subject. In 1992 he published *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Religious and Pastoral Ministry*. It won the National Catholic Press Association Book Award in 1992. "In *Sharing Faith*, Groome strengthens and expounds the philosophical foundations for his theory, which has deeply influenced American religious-education programs, and extends its application beyond religious education to such pastoral ministries and liturgy, preaching, pastoral counseling, and education for peace and justice."¹⁷¹

In *Christian Religious Education* he codifies his methodology. Most of the discussion in this section will be on the contents of that text. *Sharing Faith*, "represents a major effort to ground and extend a creative theory for religious education which is so widely accepted and employed that it risks trivialization."¹⁷² Groome's doctoral dissertation, written at the prestigious Columbia Teacher's College, is the forerunner of *CRE* and gives insight not only on his ideas for religious education methodology but for his thinking on many aspects in religious education after Vatican II.

Groome entered the field of religious education as a seminarian and priest as Vatican II was coming to a close. The doctrine versus experience argument was heating up. He would become one of the main proponents of the latter. His first teaching experience was in a Catholic boys' school. Although he had received no direction, his supervisor felt secure in the fact that he was studying theology. "I, too, assumed that I had to do little more than to draw upon my new-found theological wisdom, which, because it was so limited, seemed extensive at the time."¹⁷³ He prepared well but "By the end of the third lecture I knew only one thing with certainty- I was using the

small percent of American catholics but holding so many of the strings of power." Boston Globe, April, 28, 2002, E1.

¹⁷¹ Michael Horan, "Living, Conscious...and Metapurposeful," *Cross Currents* 43 (1993): 268.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Thomas Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), xi.

wrong approach.”¹⁷⁴ This was because of the “students’ very obvious and nearly total lack of interest in the fine lectures I had prepared.”¹⁷⁵

Many religion teachers experienced the same thing in the turbulent sixties.

Great numbers are drifting little by little into religious indifferentism, or are continuing in danger of keeping the faith without the dynamism that is necessary, a faith without effective influence on their actual lives. The question now is not one of merely preserving traditional religious customs, but rather one of also fostering an appropriate re-evangelization of men, obtaining their reconversion, and giving them a deeper and more mature education in the faith.¹⁷⁶

Tillich expressed the same concern, as Sloyan recorded: “one of the main difficulties of religious education is that it must give answers to questions that young people have never asked.”¹⁷⁷ He continued,

If they are not brought to ask the questions to which our words about God and Christ, sin and salvation, have the answers, then the truths of faith are like stones thrown at them which sooner or later must fall to the ground. The task of adequate religious education then is to find the existentially important questions which are alive in the minds and hearts of students. We must make them aware of the questions they already have.¹⁷⁸

Groome solicited solutions from them, “Their reaction was like a damburst. They had never been asked that question in religion before, and they certainly took the opportunity to voice their opinions.”¹⁷⁹ Over the next few weeks,

They developed a list of religious topics and life issues of interest to them that became our curriculum. Following some discussion of each one in small groups and in the total group, I would then respond, explaining my understanding of the Christian tradition in regard to each life issue or matter of faith which they had raised (I even used some of my old lecture notes). But even after my presentation of the ‘answers’ to their questions, the case was seldom closed. The questioning and reflection went on. My first reaction was to stifle or reprimand their continuing skepticism. But on second thought I knew I could not do so, although their apparent lack of faith in my answers continued to worry me.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ *GCD*, 6.

¹⁷⁷ Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 154, cited in Sloyan, “Religious Education as a Correlate of ‘Religious Knowledge’: Some Problem Areas” 21.

¹⁷⁸ Sloyan, “Religious Education as a Correlate of ‘Religious Knowledge’: Some Problem Areas” 21.

¹⁷⁹ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, xi.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., xii.

Nonetheless the students were happy. His colleagues were eager to learn his secret. From that point on, Groome has been dedicated to finding a better way to “do Christian religious education,”¹⁸¹ as he phrased it. That “‘scholarly quest’ led up to my doctoral work in religion and education and continues to the present. Whatever clarity and insight I offer here have arisen from the mutual enrichment of theory and praxis, both my own and other educators.”¹⁸²

His dissertation was foundational to *CRE*. He concluded,

The last chapter of most dissertations is the conclusion. But in a dissertation on praxis, nothing can be posed as a conclusion. The term is too final to be consistent with the whole ongoing process that is praxis. The end is itself always an action which in turn is to be critically reflected upon, and so it must remain an ‘open’ process, not a ‘concluded’ one. Thus instead of the ‘Conclusion’ I am offering an articulation of critical reflection of my own personal action...I offer a concentrated and more transparently personal look at myself.¹⁸³

This is indicative of the catechesis that Groome will expound and the antithesis of the catechesis desired by the Church.

Catechists after the Council

Moran’s observation on the situation of post-conciliar catechists is pertinent here. He divides catechists into four groups.

- The first group of teachers felt that nothing was happening to catechesis, despite the flurry of new words and glossier textbooks the important thing is to stick to the solid, traditional doctrines they have always taught.
- The second group had just caught on, and saw the whole picture in one great sweeping vision. “Their only question at catechetical meetings is how does one convince the old teachers that what they are doing is wrong and that they should adopt the ‘new approach.’”
- The third group was skeptical about the “new approach;” all this new material is not connecting with the students’ real lives. They notice the pained expressions on the students’ faces when someone starts ‘recounting the events of salvation history.’” “They describe their religion class in terms such as these: ‘I let the students say anything they want. We discuss their problems; we talk about movies and newspaper stories. We do anything meaningful and relevant.’”

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Thomas Groome, “Toward a Theory/Method of Liberating Catechesis,” (Ed. D. diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1976), 153.

- There was a smaller fourth group. “These are the teachers on the second wave. They have passed through the first enthusiasm for the ‘new approach’ and have met with some disappointment. They recognize very clearly that there is need for more subtlety and depth. They feel that they are now coming to grips with the hard facts of the matter.”¹⁸⁴

Study Weeks

Groome was cognizant of the International Study Weeks. He commented, “If the kerygmatic movement had emphasized the transcendent Word of God to be proclaimed (Barth), the pre-evangelization concern emphasized the immanent anthropocentric situation within which the Word is to be announced.”¹⁸⁵ However, God is not either/or, he is both/and. God is transcendent. “We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image-bound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God- ‘the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable’ - with our human representations.”¹⁸⁶ On the other hand, “because he is the free and sovereign Creator, the first cause of all that exists, God is present to his creatures’ inmost being: ‘In him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28).’”¹⁸⁷ Groome felt that the synthesis was difficult to maintain. To polarize transcendence and immanence would deny the essence and being of God.

“An International Study Week [in Medellin] was the most influential in establishing and verbalizing this development.”¹⁸⁸ “The emerging struggle for Liberation in Latin America had a major influence on the deliberations of the Week. For the first time, the social and political implications of the Christian faith were given priority. The assumption is that Christian faith as a message of salvation has radical consequences for the Church’s stance in regard to present oppressions that hold people bound.”¹⁸⁹

These became major themes in Groome’s work. Gallagher observed that Groome desired to “deepen the critical dimension of reflection on experience” and that he more deliberately sets out to hold experience and the Christian tradition ‘in a

¹⁸⁴ Moran, *Vision and Tactics*, 38-39.

¹⁸⁵ Groome, “Toward a Theory/Method of Liberating Catechesis,” 24-25.

¹⁸⁶ CCC, 42.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 300.

¹⁸⁸ Groome, “Toward a Theory/Method of Liberating Catechesis,” 24-25.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

dialectical and critical correlation.”¹⁹⁰ This was the aim of his ‘shared Christian praxis.’

Praxis

Groome’s dissertation was entitled, *Toward a Theory/Method of Liberating Catechesis*. His intention was “to describe and give the rationale for a praxis method of doing religious education. It is informed by the liberation theology and pedagogy movements”¹⁹¹ He states that his first chapter was written “out of a Roman Catholic perspective which is my tradition.”¹⁹² He makes direct reference to textbooks.

Another important beginning of a liberating catechesis is to be seen in some of the curricula materials that are now available on the market... Signs of such a catechesis are evident in grade school curricula materials of four of the leading publishers. These, and their series, are: Paulist Press, Come to the Father; William H. Sadlier, New Life Series; Silver Burdett, Life, Love, Joy Series; and Benziger Brothers, The Word is Life Series.¹⁹³

He believed that they were using a liberating catechesis “even though we are without conceptual clarity or a language to talk about it.”¹⁹⁴ However,

...this does not constitute a clear direction or movement for how we might future ourselves from here. Conservatively, there are over eighty theories presently discussed in the field of religious education. They vary from one end of the ideological spectrum to the other, and despite the hopeful examples cited, much of the curricula material continue a traditional monological form of catechesis (e.g., The Daughters of St. Paul Series—still used in many Catholic and C.C.D. programs.) There is no consensus. The field is in a state of impasse and indecisiveness.”¹⁹⁵

He believed this was because “religious education is tightly controlled by the hierarchy.”¹⁹⁶ He noted that textbooks had to have an *imprimatur*.¹⁹⁷ He concluded

¹⁹⁰ Jim Gallagher, SDB, *Soil for the Seed* (Great Wakering, Essex, England: McCrimmons, 2001), 184.

¹⁹¹ Groome, “Toward a Theory/Method of Liberating Catechesis,” Abstract.

¹⁹² Ibid. Peruvian Dominican Gustavo Gutierrez is considered the father of liberation theology. In the 1970’s *Lumen Vitae* began to focus many of their articles on Gutierrez and liberation theology, “The Theological Project of Gustavo Gutierrez.” Jacques Van Nieuwenhove, *Lumen Vitae*, XXVII, 1973, #3.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 31.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 35.

¹⁹⁶ He refers to the appendix of the *GCD* concerning First Confession before first Communion, which was often ignored in the US. “The bishops of the United States were perplexed and voted to request Rome’s permission to continue the experiment. In a Decree *Summas Pontifex* of May 24, 1973, from the Sacred Congregations for the Clergy and the Discipline of the Sacraments, it was ordered that the experiment allowing Communion without First Confession was to be ended by the close of the 1972-73

that at the time, “the bishops are still of the mindset that sees catechism as the monological process of teaching ‘truths’.”¹⁹⁸

Groome’s praxis method became known as “Shared Christian Praxis” with the publication of *CRE* in 1979. There he gave reasons for his commitment to this methodology:

- 1) it seems capable of promoting a ‘knowing’ in the biblical sense;
- 2) since it maintains a unity between the ‘theory’ and praxis, it seems more likely to promote a lived Christian faith and thus decrease the hiatus between the faith we claim and how we live;
- 3) it seems more capable than from a theory to practice way of knowing of promoting emancipation and human freedom.¹⁹⁹

This brief introduction hints at his fully developed method: he does not see the need to “hand on” the teachings of the faith; he does not make any attempt to draw his students into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; and his approach was open ended. He had a sincere desire to make his classes meaningful.

Initially in *CRE* Groome looks at educative philosophy and practice. He explains “praxis.” “For now let it be understood as ‘reflective action.’ That is a practice that is informed by theoretical reflection, or, conversely, a theoretical reflection that is informed by practice.”²⁰⁰ Groome continued,

I use it here in preference to the more common word practice because the latter term very often has the connotation of a skill or a technique, or something that is done as the application of theory and is thus, in fact, dichotomized from theory. The term praxis attempts to keep theory and practice together as dual and mutually enriching moments of the same intentional human activity.²⁰¹

school year. Such a high-handed and non-dialogical policy decision exemplifies a mindset that still pervades much of religious education.” “Toward a Theory/Method of Liberating Catechesis,” 33.

¹⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the deficiencies were all found in textbooks that had an imprimatur as Sean Innerst had noted.

¹⁹⁸ Groome, “Toward a Theory/Method of Liberating Catechesis,” 33.

¹⁹⁹ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 177.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, xvii,

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

There are few sources critical of Groome. “Conservatives” often have “knee-jerk” reactions to his name.²⁰² Eamonn Keane was critical of Groome’s approach. His style is reminiscent of Wrenn, G. Kelly, K. Whitehead and Steichen.²⁰³ Keane believes that,

At the root of Groome’s theological and pedagogical project is a flawed Christology, ecclesiology and anthropology. In presenting Jesus primarily as one who preached a radical egalitarianism that ended all political, social and religious hierarchies, Groome’s ‘reconstructed’ Catholicism has little to do with the real and historical faith.²⁰⁴

In the Preface to *CRE*, Groome professed, “My own religious tradition is the Christian one, and more immediately the Catholic expression of it. Because my religious education has been done from within the Christian tradition and community of faith, I choose the title *Christian Religious Education* for what I reflect on here.”²⁰⁵ There is little evidence of this in *CRE*.

Epistemology

In explaining the philosophical roots of a praxis way of knowing, Groome studied the history of epistemological theory. The philosophical foundations of catechesis are crucial.

Philosophical enquiry can help greatly to clarify the relationship between truth and life, between event and doctrinal truth, and above all between transcendent truth and humanly comprehensible language. This involves a reciprocity between the theological disciplines and the insights drawn from the various strands of philosophy; and such a reciprocity can prove genuinely fruitful for the communication and deeper understanding of the faith.²⁰⁶

²⁰² While interviewing a person for a significant professional position in catechetics, I asked, “How do you feel about the work of Thomas Groome?” The person responded, “He is an idiot.” When I asked for elaboration, he had to admit that he really did not know his work.

²⁰³ Keane has chosen an interesting group of people to write the opening remarks of his book. The Preface was written by Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Neb., one of the most conservative bishops in the United States. Donna Steichen, whose criticism of Moran has been noted in previous chapters, wrote the Foreword. And Msgr. Michael Wrenn wrote the Introduction. They form a triumvirate of conservative catechetical thought in the United States.

²⁰⁴ Eamonn Keane, *A Generation Betrayed* (Long Island City, New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), 236.

²⁰⁵ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, Preface xiii, He made a similar point in his dissertation which was written at a non-Catholic institution.

²⁰⁶ *Fides et Ratio*, 99.

Groome determined that, “A large amount of contemporary philosophical, theological, and educational literature is liberally laced with the word praxis. However, the word is used in a variety of ways. The problem arises, in part, from the complexity of the notion itself and the absence of a single English word to translate it.”²⁰⁷ He provided a chronological excursus of the epistemological link between Aristotle and Hebrew/Christian thought. He states,

The Hebrew and New Testament way of knowing God is not a speculative exercise nor a contemplative removal from the world. It calls instead for a reflective engagement in the world in obedience to God’s reign and in response to the experience of God in the midst of history. The Incarnation itself is an act of divine praxis—the Word becoming flesh in time and place.²⁰⁸

He referred to the *Didache*, which saw the connection between the teaching of the Apostles and Revelation, and contains explicit references to handing on their teaching. Groome chose not to focus on this but on its admonitions to a Christian moral life. He went from a Christocentric reading proper to the treatise to an anthropocentric one. While the Christian moral life is vital, its vitality is centered on a relationship to Christ. “My child, day and night ‘you should remember him who preaches God’s word to you (Hebrews 13:7)’ and honor him as you would the Lord. For where the Lord’s nature is discussed, there the Lord is.”²⁰⁹ “Be patient, merciful, harmless, quiet, and good; and always ‘have respect for the teaching’ you have been given.”²¹⁰

Groome proceeded to the catechetical School of Alexandria. He credited it for the shift from a focus on knowledge to practice in their endeavor to reconcile Christianity to Greek Philosophy. It moved as far from “a biblical way of knowing [that which he credited the catechumenate and the *Didache*] as the philosophers had from a praxis one.”²¹¹ He concluded that “the theologians often favored an experiential/reflective way of knowing their own enterprise, but when recommending a process of Christian education, they assumed that they had already discovered what the people ought to know.”²¹²

²⁰⁷ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 152.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁰⁹ *Didache*, 4

²¹⁰ *Didache*, 3

²¹¹ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 159.

²¹² *Ibid.*

However, the early theologians, even as they dealt with speculative questions regarding the deposit of faith, were intent on remaining faithful to what God had revealed in Jesus Christ. Groome determined that “As a result, they proposed a very didactic approach that would impart the message of Christianity without paying much attention to the lived experience of the learners.”²¹³ He gives an example.

Augustine’s pedagogical insights were far ahead of his time. However, in contraindication to his theological method, he proposed a didactic narrational process to instruct people in the story of salvation history with no apparent attention to the lived experience of the students as a dimension of knowing. This is especially evident in his best known catechetical work, *De Catechizandis Rudibus*.²¹⁴

Augustine’s methodology, seen earlier, does not support Groome’s claim.

Groome then discusses Thomas Aquinas. From Aristotle “he knew that nothing was ever in the intellect that is not in the senses and thus an experiential/reflective way of knowing is at the bedrock of his great theological Summa.”²¹⁵ But Groome believed that like Augustine, Aquinas “espoused a “theory to practice way of knowing”, which not only overlooked the biblical way of knowing for religious education, but also “He assumed that theologians and the Church *magisterium* had already synthesized the propositional statements what is required for Christian knowing. These propositions were to be taught to the people, who were then to apply them to practice.”²¹⁶

In reality Aquinas understood,

...the need for a philosophy of *genuinely metaphysical* range, capable, that is, of transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for truth. This requirement is implicit in sapiential and analytical knowledge alike; and in particular it is a requirement for knowing the moral good, which has its ultimate foundation in the Supreme Good, God himself.²¹⁷

Groome held that from the time of the counter-Reformation, “the epistemological assumption of the knowing process most appropriate to intentional religious education is to move from ‘theory to practice,’ from outside of experience into the lives of

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 160.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 161.

²¹⁷ *Fides et Ratio*, 83.

people, was firmly established for Roman Catholics. It has remained the predominant way of knowing of our intentional religious education until recent times.”²¹⁸ Previous chapters noted the veracity of this process, based on the theocentric action of revelation/response of faith; love of God, love of neighbor compelled by the incarnational dynamism inherent in Christ’s admonition, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love” (Jn 15:9).

Groome stated, “I do not mean to condemn the Scholastics or Reformers for making such epistemological assumptions for Christian education. They were people of their time and so they reflect the educational practice of their historical context.”²¹⁹ “The notion of experiential way of knowing for intentional education emerged only with Comenius, Locke and Rousseau, and their ideas had little impact on the Church’s formal education.”²²⁰

He moved to the 19th century. “In dialectic to Hegel’s position, Marx put humankind in the place of *Geist* [not an abstract and transcendent Wisdom, but an infinite, active reason that guides the world by Providence²²¹] as the self-constituent agent of historical becoming.”²²² Man becomes the center. Groome disavowed himself of Marx’s atheism; to adopt his dialectical materialism in praxis would result in Pelagianism- saving ourselves by human efforts. “If we were to accept such an understanding of an expectation from human praxis, we would be denying both the reality of sin and the gift of God’s grace and the Kingdom.”²²³ However, his methodology will have a certain resemblance to some marxist thought.

He criticized the work of Jürgen Habermas, but embraced his idea of critical reason as “essential for transforming human praxis, but the enlightening Spirit and God’s grace of discernment is the a priori gift by which it takes place. Then it *may* be emancipatory.”²²⁴

²¹⁸ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 161.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., 163.

²²² Ibid., 165.

²²³ Ibid., 168.

²²⁴ Ibid., 175.

Paulo Freire

“The philosophical background to my understanding of a praxis way of knowing would not be complete without pointing to the educational work of Paulo Freire. Freire is the most significant exponent of a praxis approach to education today.”²²⁵ Groome credits Freire, a Brazilian, as the inspiration for a praxis approach in religious education. He “offers perhaps the most the most compelling argument in our day that all education must be an exercise in freedom.”²²⁶ Given that Groome sought a liberating religious education, this is not surprising. Groome credits him for sparking his own use of praxis particularly *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. “He argues for such an approach precisely because he believes it is capable of promoting human emancipation.”²²⁷

The methodology of Paulo Freire, once considered such a threat to the established order that he was forced to leave Brazil for some twenty years before returning to São Paulo, has helped to empower countless impoverished and illiterate people. It has also taken on considerable relevance for educators in our own technologically advanced society which to our detriment acts to program the individual- especially the disadvantaged- to a rigid conformity.²²⁸

Schaull determined that Freire’s work was as important for us as for the dispossessed of Latin America. “Their struggle to become free Subjects and to participate in the transformation of their society, is similar in many ways to the struggle not only of blacks and Mexican Americans but also of the middle class young people in this country.”²²⁹

Groome felt that Freire’s praxis was for educators “intending liberation and humanization.”²³⁰ Was this necessary for religious education? “Freire argues that education is to be an exercise in freedom. To achieve such an end he proposes a ‘problem-solving’ critical reflection on the present reality approach, in opposition to what he calls the ‘banking method’ for doing education.”²³¹ He did feel that Freire did not fully explain praxis. “As a result it is not all that clear how one might attempt to construct an intentional pedagogical activity by a praxis approach in something other

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 103, cf. Freire, “Conscientization,” 23.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1996), Publisher’s Foreword.

²²⁹ Richard Schaull, “Foreword,” in Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 11.

²³⁰ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 176.

than a literacy program.”²³² If that is the case, why does he construct a methodology based on praxis? He also felt that Freire placed “undue emphasis on the present and future, to the almost neglect of the past.”²³³ Moran also had difficulty with the past. Groome lists Freire’s three basic philosophical assumptions.

- Humanization is the basic human vocation.
- People are capable of changing their reality.
- Education is never neutral.

Freire defined dehumanization as “a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human.”²³⁴ He sought to help the oppressed overthrow their oppressors, and sees this rebellion as an act of love because it opposes “the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressor’s violence, lovelessness even when clothed in false generosity.”²³⁵ He also believed that the self-perception of the oppressed as such is often “impaired by their submission in the reality of oppression.”²³⁶ To overcome oppression “people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one that makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity.”²³⁷ “However the oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires.”²³⁸

Freire felt that the resolution between the oppressor and oppressed must be objectively verifiable and “that the concrete situation which begets oppression must be transformed.” He cites Marx’s idea of the dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity. “Just as objective social reality exists not by chance, but is the product of human action, so it is not transformed by chance...transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity.”²³⁹

Freire uses the theories of Marx and Georg Lukács. “Reflection, which is essential to action, is implicit in Lukács’ requirement of ‘explaining to the masses their own

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 26.

²³⁵ Ibid., 27.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., 29.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid., 33.

action', just as it is implicit in the purpose he attributes to this explanation" that of 'consciously activating the subsequent development of experience.'²⁴⁰

In addition, Freire stressed that the "pedagogy of the oppressed cannot be developed or practiced by the oppressors."²⁴¹ He makes the distinction between "systematic education which can only be changed by political power, and educational projects, which should be carried out with the oppressed in the process of organizing them."²⁴²

Finally, he holds that true reflection leads to action. "On the other hand when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection."²⁴³ Therefore, "in this sense the praxis is the new *raison d'être* of the oppressed; and the revolution, which inaugurates the historical moment of this *raison d'être*, is not viable apart from their concomitant conscious involvement. Otherwise action is pure activism."²⁴⁴

Groome's understanding of religious education must be determined before his application of Freire can be analyzed.

Religious Education or Catechesis?

Gabriel Moran discussed the debate concerning the difference between religious education and catechesis in *Two Languages of Religious Education*.²⁴⁵ Moran identified Christian Education with the idea of "indoctrination of children to obey an official church."²⁴⁶ Groome thought he went too far in his description, and opined, "I am confident a time is coming when emancipatory possibilities of Christianity will be realized more faithfully, and then the term Christian education will have no such oppressive overtones."²⁴⁷

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 35.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 36.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 48.

²⁴⁵ Gabriel Moran, "Two Languages of Religious Education", *Living Light*, Vol. 14, 1, Sp. 77.

²⁴⁶ Moran, *Religious Body*, 156, in Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 24.

²⁴⁷ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 14.

Groome looked at etymology of “educate,” that is “leading out.”²⁴⁸ It has three dimensions: “an ‘already’, a ‘being realized’ and a ‘not yet’ dimension to it.”²⁴⁹ “One of the basic assumptions from which educational activity arises is that the people who were here before us learned from their experience.”²⁵⁰ In explanation he referred to Dewey, who called such knowledge “the funded capital of civilization.”²⁵¹ This was necessary for, “without it our present is impoverished and our future diminished.”²⁵² Groome thought it was received as an inheritance rather than discovered in our own experience.²⁵³

Groome appreciated Moran’s conception of time in religious education.²⁵⁴ This is crucial to the further development of his method. Moran focused only on the present, convinced that revelation was occurring there. Groome values the past, “There is an obvious wisdom and validity in this assumption about and concern for what is already known.”²⁵⁵ However, “When it is given primacy in educational decisions, the curriculum is drawn mainly from the disciplines of knowledge. Pedagogically it tends to express itself in a deductive or didactic form of teaching that takes the content of the disciplines as the starting point.”²⁵⁶ As in Freire’s “banking” concept of education, past knowledge is useful, “but it cannot be allowed to hold sway without a balance.”²⁵⁷

As for the present, “Pedagogically, beginning the educational activity with the lived experience of the students rather than with the content of the disciplines of knowledge, tends to lead to inductive, or ‘discovery’ models of teaching.”²⁵⁸ The use

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ In a footnote, (CRE 18) Groome states, “The thinking of Gabriel Moran on temporality has also influenced my position here. On this point Moran writes, ‘The unity of time is the present and that there are within the present two dimensions of time, the past and future’ (Moran, *The Present Revelation*, 119). In the next footnote, he quotes Moran again. “Time considered as linear provides a past that is simply there, fatefully limiting where we are now; it also provides the future that simply is not here yet, distracting us by the thought that it may or may not happen. By contrast, time as humanely and organically understood frees us from the bondage of any fate and allows us to live as free men” (*The Present Revelation*, 127).

²⁵⁵ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 7.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 8.

of the present must also remain in balance, or it “becomes a prisoner of itself, captured in an ahistorical cage of ‘now’, deprived of its past and disowning its future.”²⁵⁹

“We educate to ensure that all of us can have a future.”²⁶⁰ Groome quotes Dewey, “The educator...is obliged to see his present work in terms of what it accomplishes, or fails to accomplish, for a future whose objects are linked with those of the present.”²⁶¹ Like Dewey and Freire, Groome emphasized the need for education to lead its participants into the future to make it a better world.²⁶²

Groome defined education: “I name the nature of education activity as *a political activity with pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with people to our present, to the past heritage it embodies, and to the future possibility it holds for the total person and community.*”²⁶³ He concludes that because education leads beyond the present to the realization of full possibilities, “one can say that all education, at least implicitly, is a reach for the transcendent.”²⁶⁴

Religion is, “*the human quest for the transcendent in which one’s relationship with and ultimate ‘ground’ of being is brought to consciousness and somehow given expression.*”²⁶⁵ Religious education is “*a deliberate attending to the transcendent dimension of life by which a conscious relationship to an ultimate ground of being is promoted and enabled to come to expression.*”²⁶⁶ It focuses specific attention on empowering people in their quest for a transcendent and ultimate ground of being.²⁶⁷ Grammatically, “By its adjective it points to its specificity, and by its noun it retains its commonality with all education, an important bond to maintain.”²⁶⁸ “I claim that when religious education is done by and from within a Christian community, the most

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Quoted in Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 9, from Dewey’s *Experience and Education*, 76.

²⁶² One is reminded of the Better World Movement founded by Italian socialist Riccardo Lombardi (1901-1984), and made popular by the Jesuits in the 60’s and 70’s.

²⁶³ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 21. Groome used phrases such as “I name” or “I understand”, which is a foretaste of a process of religious education that becomes subjective and relativistic. It is also similar to the practice of Gabriel Moran who frequently redefined terms.

²⁶⁴ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 21.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 22, He cites Paul Tillich for the term “ground of being.”

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

descriptive term to name it is Christian Religious Education.”²⁶⁹ He had much to say about “Christian” but little to say about Christ.

Hofinger believed that a Christian view of catechesis would provide catechists with the right attitude. “As soon as we desire to be nothing but instruments of Christ- but to be his perfect instruments- clearly we shall want to do our work as well as possible. And therefore we shall be eager to use every means that may help to perfect our teaching. But at the same time we shall never become slaves to methods.”²⁷⁰ Groome “names” Christian religious education as “*a political activity with pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with them to the activity of God in our present to the Story of the Christian faith community, and to the Vision of God’s kingdom, the seeds of which are already among us.*”²⁷¹

He referred to Vatican II’s “breakthrough” in the life of the Church, but rarely quotes from it or from any catechetical document. He rejected the word “catechesis” in the process of religious education because it connoted oral education, “The message was to be taught and spoken accurately.”²⁷² Groome insisted that catechesis is oral, “The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council use catechesis in this sense by invariably speaking of it as instruction and placing it within the ‘ministry of the word.’”²⁷³ He pointed to the attempts to redefine catechesis, including Marthaler’s “process whereby individuals are initiated and socialized in the Church community,”²⁷⁴ and to

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 23.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 24.

²⁷⁰ Hofinger, *The Good News and its Proclamation*, 13.

²⁷¹ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 25.

²⁷² Ibid., 26. He referred to Apollos who “spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.” (Acts 18:25). He also referred to Augustine, Alcuin, and Aquinas. Groome held that it became a Catholic word after the Reformation and was revived in the 20th by the catechetical schools work Vienna and Munich. He omitted *Acerbo Nimis*, which does use it frequently..

²⁷³ Ibid., 27. Groome refers to DV 25, “Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word. This is to be done so that none of them will become ‘an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly’ since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy.”

²⁷⁴ Marthaler “Toward a Revisionist Model in Catechetics,” *Living Light* 13 (1976), 459, quoted in Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 27.

Westerhoff, who proposed “a meaning for the word so broad that it describes the whole process of Christian becoming.”²⁷⁵

Groome looked at the catechumenate, which he opined “placed increased emphasis on doctrinal instruction but continued to be a relational/experiential process of initiation into the Christian community by which the catechumens were prepared for living the Christian life.”²⁷⁶ Groome attempted to reduce the catechumenate to shared praxis, although the GCD’s explanation of the catechumenate is much deeper.

Its purpose is to direct the spiritual journey of persons who are preparing themselves for the reception of baptism, and to give direction to their habits of thought and changes in moral living. It is a preparatory school in Christian living, an introduction to the religious, liturgical, charitable, and apostolic life of the People of God (cf. AG, 13-14; SC, 65; CD, 14).²⁷⁷

Groome had more difficulty with the catechumenal model after the promulgation of the *GDC* which made an explicit link between the catechumenate and all catechesis, “there is an acute awareness that catechesis must have a catechumenal style, as of integral formation rather than mere information; it must act in reality as a means of arousing true conversion”²⁷⁸ This is referring to *CT* 19: “The specific character of catechesis, as distinct from the initial conversion - bringing proclamation of the Gospel, has the twofold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁷⁹ Finally it states, “Given that the *missio ad gentes* is the paradigm of all the Church’s missionary activity, the baptismal catechumenate, which is joined to it, is the model of its catechizing activity.”²⁸⁰

Groome misunderstood the *GDC*,

I am concerned that asking the catechumenal model to carry all catechesis will diminish the catechumenate’s effectiveness in its primary purpose—initiating adult converts—and will curtail rather than encourage permanent catechetical education. To think of catechizing in purely catechumenal terms will focus us

²⁷⁵ Westerhoff, “Risking an Answer: A Conclusion,” in *Who are We* (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1978), 264-77, referred to in Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 27.

²⁷⁶ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 158.

²⁷⁷ *GCD*, 130.

²⁷⁸ *GDC*, 29.

²⁷⁹ *CT*, 19.

²⁸⁰ *GDC*, 90.

exclusively on the sacraments of *initiation* as if they were sacraments of *termination*.²⁸¹

He missed the liturgical, pastoral, and doctrinal aspects of the catechumenate and that all catechesis is concerned with maturation, with life-long conversion which is so explicitly described in the *GDC*:

Faith, by means of which man responds to the proclamation of the Gospel, requires Baptism. The close connection between the two realities is rooted in the will of Christ himself, who commanded his apostles to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them. 'The mission to baptize, and so the sacramental mission, is implied in the mission to evangelize.'

Those who have converted to Jesus Christ and who have been educated in the faith by means, of catechesis, by receiving the sacraments of Christian initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) 'are delivered from the powers of darkness through the sacraments of Christian initiation and having died, been buried, and risen with Christ, they receive the Spirit of adoption as children and celebrate with the whole people of God the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.'²⁸²

The Congregation for Christian Education addressed religious education versus catechesis.

The close connection makes it possible for a school to remain a school and still integrate culture with the message of Christianity. The distinction comes from the fact that, unlike religious instruction, catechesis presupposes that the hearer is receiving the Christian message as a salvific reality. Moreover, catechesis takes place within a community living out its faith at a level of space and time not available to a school: a whole lifetime.²⁸³

It adds, "It is evident, of course, that religious instruction cannot help but strengthen the faith of a believing student, just as catechesis cannot help but increase one's knowledge of the Christian message."²⁸⁴

Obviously, the *GCD* used the word "catechesis." Occasionally it refers to religious instruction, but in the context of catechesis, "in regions which have been Christian

²⁸¹ Thomas Groome, "Conversion, Nurture, or Both: Towards a Lifelong Catechetical Education—A Cautious Reading of the *GDC*, *Living Light* 37 (2001): 17.

²⁸² *GDC* 65

²⁸³ Congregation for Christian Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*, 68.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

from of old, catechesis often takes the form of religious instruction given to children and adolescents in schools or outside a school atmosphere.²⁸⁵

Groome asserted that catechesis, “fails to name and thus severs the Christian educational enterprise from its commonality with education and religious education.”²⁸⁶ “How does one do catechesis, or train other people to do it, or build programs to effect it? If we use the term catechesis to name the total enterprise of sponsoring people toward Christian faith, then it is difficult to know where to begin or how to prepare oneself to be a catechist.”²⁸⁷ The Church would have us begin with Christ.

But he says catechesis is such a “Church word” that the tendency will be (and often is) to draw upon only the “sacred sciences” and especially theology and scripture studies. If the same enterprise is called Christian religious education, however, the word Christian calls for the activity to be informed by theology and scripture studies. But the name also points to another very obvious source—the science of education (and thus to the many other sciences that inform education) to draw from and empower the activity.²⁸⁸

The Church says, “Within our present century, catechists have thoroughly investigated questions raised by the psychological, educational, and pedagogical sciences.”²⁸⁹

The summit and center of catechetical formation lies in an aptitude and ability to communicate the Gospel message. This formation requires, therefore, an accurate formation in theological doctrine, in anthropology, and in methodology, geared to the level of knowledge that is to be attained. The formation does not end, however, with the acquisition of doctrinal knowledge. The formation is complete when the catechist becomes competent to select the most suitable method for communicating the Gospel message to groups and individuals who live in circumstances always different and singular.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁵ *GCD*, 19.

²⁸⁶ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 27.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *GCD*, 70. This section of the *Directory* has been referred to previously in the discussion of methodology proper.

²⁹⁰ *GCD*, 111.

The *GDC* clarified the use of catechesis; it “has undergone a semantic evolution during the twenty centuries of the Church’s history. In this *Directory* the concept of catechesis takes its inspiration from the post-conciliar Magisterial documents, principally from *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Catechesi Tradendae* and *Redemptoris Missio*. ”²⁹¹ Moran used religious education exclusively. In 2001, Groome was still engaged in the argument, and urged “a more cautious reading of the *GDC*, one that is alert to the dangers of totalizing a conversion/catechumenal paradigm.”²⁹² The *GDC* observed, “The concept of catechesis which one has, profoundly conditions the selection and organization of its contents (*cognitive, experiential, behavioral*), identifies those to whom it is addressed and defines the pedagogy to be employed in accomplishing its objectives.”²⁹³

Moran asserted “Religious education begins by naming the ways people live and then it attempts to give them a richer communal meaning for working out their lives. The sequence must be from naming to prescribing, and the validity of the prescription is linked to the appreciation of and engagement in what is named.”²⁹⁴ “It primarily involves *self*-reflection by each would-be Christian educator, because Christian religious education as such does not have a purpose. The educators are the ones with the purpose, and it is our corporate intentions and hopes that can be posed as the general purpose of the endeavor.”²⁹⁵ By this point, it is not surprising that Groome starts with the self in regard to any discussion of religious education. By “purpose” he means *telos*, the end. “Toward what end are Christian religious educators to do their leading out?”²⁹⁶ In Christianity, God is the “end” of man. “I suggest that our metapurpose as Christian religious educators is to lead people out to the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ.”²⁹⁷

²⁹¹ *GDC*, 35.

²⁹² Groome, “Conversion, Nurture, or Both,” 17.

²⁹³ *GDC*, 35.

²⁹⁴ Gabriel Moran, *Religious Education Development*, 1983, 83. In “The Concrete, the Communal and the Contribution of Gabriel Moran,” Padraic O’Hare, *Religious Education* 79 (1984): 110.

²⁹⁵ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 33.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 35. Paul Likoudis quotes from an issue of Sadlier’s *Growth in Christ* (1966). “[Teilhard’s] theory of evolution is not without its flaws, but it stands out as the prophetic vision of the 20th century.” “What is really new in Teilhard’s theory of evolution is the idea of evolution moving toward a goal. Evolution is not a haphazard change but well-ordered change moving toward the goal of the fulfillment of the universe, when all things- material, living, social, and cultural- come under man’s control so that man can fulfill himself as the master and summit of creation. If there is a divine plan visible in the history of the universe, it is a plan to bring all things to fulfillment under the hand of man. Evolution

The Kingdom of God

The kingdom was a recurring theme in *Lumen Gentium*. From Christ and his Paschal Mystery, “the Church, equipped with the gifts of its Founder and faithfully guarding His precepts of charity, humility and self-sacrifice, receives the mission to proclaim and to spread among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God and to be, on earth, the initial budding forth of that kingdom. While it slowly grows, the Church strains toward the completed Kingdom and, with all its strength, hopes and desires to be united in glory with its King.”²⁹⁸ To enter the kingdom “one must first accept Jesus’ word: The word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field; those who hear it with faith and are numbered among the little flock of Christ have truly received the kingdom. Then, by its own power, the seed sprouts and grows until the harvest.”²⁹⁹

Simultaneously, the kingdom is now not yet. “To fulfill the Father’s will, Christ ushered in the Kingdom of heaven on earth. The Church ‘is the Reign of Christ already present in mystery.’”³⁰⁰ Though already present in his Church, Christ’s reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled “with power and great glory” by the king’s return to earth.”³⁰¹ Being Christ-minded, Christians will “*hasten the coming of the Reign of God*,” “a kingdom of justice, love, and peace.”³⁰² “At the end of time, the Kingdom of

has reached a point where it is now under man’s control.” “...Mankind is building the kingdom of God. We are participating in God’s creative activity by marshaling the elements of the universe into new forms, so that all forces- material, social, and cultural- nourish an emerging mankind. We participate in God’s redeeming activity by ceaseless war against the forces of evil- in our physical world, in our biological and psychological organisms, in our social structure, and in our culture... “The risen Christ is the symbol of emerging mankind. He has already achieved the goal toward which we are still striving...In Christ, God made himself manifest in the midst of the evolving universe and displayed our goal toward which we human persons must move to find the fulfillment God has planned for us” (“Retrospective on the Revolution,” Part 2 “The Spirit of the New Catechesis: Libertinism, Rebellion, and Pride” *The Wanderer*, June 28, 2001, www.dotm.org/60splan2.htm.)

²⁹⁸ *LG*, 5. The *Catechism* has it: “in the New Testament, the word *basileia* can be translated by “kingship” (abstract noun), “kingdom” (concrete noun) or “reign” (action noun). Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is brought near in the Word incarnate, it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel, and it has come in Christ’s death and Resurrection. The Kingdom of God has been coming since the Last Supper and, in the Eucharist, it is in our midst. The kingdom will come in glory when Christ hands it over to his Father” (*CCC*, 2816).

²⁹⁹ *CCC*, 543.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 763; *LG*, 5.

³⁰¹ *CCC*, 671.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 2046.

God will come in its fullness.” The *GCD* speaks of the relationship between catechesis and eschatological hope.³⁰³

Groome admitted, “Christianity offers people the grace and hope of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, and such a hope will always be integral to our purpose of being Christian.”³⁰⁴ He adds “But there is a strong consensus in contemporary theology that to understand the purpose of being Christian exclusively in such an individualized and ‘otherworldly’ manner is an impoverished and inaccurate understanding of the salvation made possible in Jesus Christ.”³⁰⁵

Groome’s reliance on “consensus” does not mesh with Catholic teaching on the role of theologians and the magisterium of the Church.³⁰⁶ He does say that he is not engaged in a theological study of the Kingdom. “Rather, I bring the hermeneutic of a Christian religious educator to investigate the meaning of the symbol.”³⁰⁷ He does not explain the how this hermeneutic works. The Pontifical Biblical Commission was concerned about the connection between biblical hermeneutics and catechesis. “The effectiveness of the catechesis depends on the value of the hermeneutic employed.”³⁰⁸ Groome’s new creation of the Kingdom of God comes from his desire for a “liberating catechesis”, which is rooted in “liberation theology.” The CDF asserted the desire for freedom and a theology of liberation, “can be understood only in light of the specific message of Revelation, authentically interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church.”³⁰⁹

³⁰³ From the Greek word *eschaton*, meaning “last.” “Eschatology refers to the area of Christian faith which is concerned about ‘the last things,’ and the coming of Jesus on ‘the last day’: our human destiny, death, judgment, resurrection of the body, heaven, purgatory, and hell - all of which are contained in the final articles of the Creed (CCC, 1001, 1020-1050; cf. 2771)” (CCC, Glossary).

³⁰⁴ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 35.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ See Chapter II.

³⁰⁷ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 36.

³⁰⁸ Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 4.

³⁰⁹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Instruction on Certain Aspects of the “Theology of Liberation”, 4. Michael Harrison noted, “Because of the similarities between liberation theology and Freire’s educational theory, it is not surprising that the critique from first world theologians and educators has been similar.” They are: theological critique that both theories lead to an over-reliance on humanity, ignoring the place of God in history; both theories have been developed in Latin America and cannot be adequately transformed in first world countries. Michael Harrison, “Liberation Perspectives on Justice Education”, www.justiceeducation.org.au/background/liberation-perspectives-on-justice-education.html.

The PBC addressed liberation theology in relation to biblical hermeneutics, speaking of a “hermeneutic of suspicion: since history was normally written by the victors, establishing the full truth requires that one does not simply trust texts as they stand but look for signs which may reveal something quite different.”³¹⁰

Groome also exemplified the “hermeneutic of discontinuity” by proposing a new definition of the kingdom. He uses the word “lifestyle” in regards to living in the Kingdom here and now. The dictionary defines lifestyle as “a manner of living that reflects the person’s values and attitudes.” One could ask, “Is a lifestyle worth dying for?”

Jesus and the Kingdom

The Catechism says “One must enter the kingdom, that is, become a disciple of Christ, in order to ‘know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.’ For those who stay ‘outside,’ everything remains enigmatic.”³¹¹ Groome’s explanation of Christ in the Kingdom is a departure from Catholic thought. He espouses a “low Christology”, as did Moran. “A Christology from above, typical of much traditional Christology, emphasizes the divine nature of Christ and God’s initiative in coming to the world in Jesus. A Christology from below, on the other hand, emphasizes the human nature and life of Christ.”³¹²

The dogmatic pragmatism of the early years of this century, which viewed the truths of faith as nothing more than rules of conduct, has already been refuted and rejected; but the temptation always remains of understanding these truths in purely functional terms. This leads only to an approach which is inadequate, reductive and superficial at the level of speculation. A Christology, for example, which proceeded solely “from below”, as is said nowadays, or an ecclesiology developed solely on the model of civil society, would be hard pressed to avoid the danger of such reductionism.³¹³

Groome emphasizes, “*The central theme in the preaching and life of Jesus was the Kingdom of God.*”³¹⁴ This is obvious in the Gospels. His source, however, is a consensus of most theologians. He makes reference only to Schillebeeckx and Küng by name. Groome admits that Jesus went beyond the traditional Hebrew belief in the

³¹⁰ Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 2.

³¹¹ CCC, 546.

³¹² Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 39.

³¹³ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 97.

Kingdom. “*He considers the kingdom to have already and definitively arrived and points to his own person, his work, and his ministry, as its effective agent.*”³¹⁵ He pointed to Jesus’ double commandment of love of God and love of neighbor, radicalizing who the neighbor is, beyond Jewish belief that neighbor could not mean a non-Jew; just look parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).

Groome acknowledged, “From Jesus’ whole ministry it is clear that the only fitting response to the Kingdom in him is metanoia, a ‘change of heart.’”³¹⁶ It would appear that Groome is moving towards the aims of catechesis- understanding and conversion.³¹⁷ He continued, “His announcing of the Kingdom is a call to live the will of God, and since God wills to love all people, this requires our conversion to neighbor. Such is what Schillebeeckx calls the ‘praxis of the kingdom of God,’ a metanoia that causes us faithfully to manifest its coming in a consistent way of living.”³¹⁸

Groome asserted that Jesus did not tell his apostles “Go build the Kingdom.”³¹⁹ This is true, but his concept of metanoia and serving the Kingdom becomes entirely horizontal, “although Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom as gift coming by the grace and power of God, he also demanded of its members an active response according to the values of the Kingdom within time and history.”³²⁰ He determined that because we were not aware of our ability to contribute to and shape our future, “To expect the historical Jesus to have had such a consciousness is to fall into a docetist denial of his humanity.”³²¹ By the same measure, his devaluing of the divinity of Christ is skirting the heresy of Arianism. He theorized, “Apparently, a shift in emphasis first emerged in the early Church from preaching what Jesus preached to preaching Jesus as the

³¹⁴ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 39, italics his.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 40, italics his.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 41.

³¹⁷ CT, 20.

³¹⁸ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 41; Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, 154.

³¹⁹ Groome gives examples, “Seek first the kingdom (Matt. 6:33); the kingdom is like good soil (Matt. 13:4-23) etc.

³²⁰ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 42.

³²¹ Ibid., 42. The Docetists were “A heretical sect dating back to Apostolic times. Their name is derived from *dokesis*, “appearance” or “semblance,” because they taught that Christ only “appeared” or “seemed to be a man, to have been born, to have lived and suffered. Some denied the reality of Christ’s human nature altogether, some only the reality of His human body or of His birth or death.” (www.newadvent.org).

Christ, Messiah, and Lord.³²² Groome can then assert that the response to the kingdom is not to God but to neighbor. Groome enters into the debate concerning Jesus Christ as “Jesus of faith,” or “Christ of history” so prevalent in modern biblical scholarship.

He focused on Jesus’ earthly life but omitted the paschal mystery, that “Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem manifests the coming of the kingdom that the Messiah-King, welcomed into his city by children and the humble of heart, is going to accomplish by the Passover of his Death and Resurrection.”³²³ Groome ignores the soteriological and eschatological ramifications of Jesus’ life.

GS (the only decree that Groome actually refers to), taught,

While helping the world and receiving many benefits from it, the Church has a single intention: that God’s kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass. For every benefit which the People of God during its earthly pilgrimage can offer to the human family stems from the fact that the Church is “the universal sacrament of salvation”, simultaneously manifesting and a rising the mystery of God’s love.³²⁴

He believed that the shift to a liberation perspective in theology stressed the importance of the kingdom. “This shift has been augmented by the emergence of the ‘Christology from below’ referred to earlier.”³²⁵ He asserted that our understanding has to be true to Christ’s understanding of the Kingdom “...but we need to reinterpret the symbol and its meaning in our lives in the light of contemporary experience and conscience.”³²⁶ For the Church the development of doctrine, comes through “a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities

³²² Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 42

³²³ CCC, 570.

³²⁴ GS, 45. In addition the *Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium* raises the same point in regard to liturgy:

Just as Christ was sent by the Father, so also He sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This He did that, by preaching the gospel to every creature (14), they might proclaim that the Son of God, by His death and resurrection, had freed us from the power of Satan (15) and from death, and brought us into the kingdom of His Father. His purpose also was that they might accomplish the work of salvation which they had proclaimed, by means of sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves. Thus by baptism men are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with Him, are buried with Him, and rise with Him (16); they receive the spirit of adoption as sons “in which we cry: Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15), and thus become true adorers whom the Father seeks” (SC, 6).

³²⁵ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 43.

³²⁶ Ibid.

which they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth.”³²⁷ He speaks of a process of reinterpretation in the study of eschatologies.”³²⁸ Again, he cites theological consensus for his proposition.³²⁹ Groome admits Jesus came to establish the Kingdom, but, we have “something vital to add to its final perfection.”³³⁰ “The view I favor on this question is similar to the centrist position taken by the Second Vatican Council, which states clearly in GS (Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) that the call of the Christian is ‘to make ready the material’ of the kingdom (Art. 38) and that the ‘fruits’ of our efforts will endure in the final Kingdom (Art. 39).”³³¹

His argument is not clear from GS itself. There is no evidence there that we assist in the perfection of the Kingdom. We do cooperate in the work of salvation. GS emphasizes Christ’s work to perfect mankind so that they are ready to enter the eternal kingdom.

Appointed Lord by His resurrection and given plenary power in heaven and on earth, Christ is now at work in the hearts of men through the energy of His Holy Spirit, arousing not only a desire for the age to come, but by that very fact animating, purifying and strengthening those noble longings too by which the human family makes its life more human and strives to render the whole earth submissive to this goal.³³²

By Christ’s sacrifice mankind is freed, and can achieve perfection through love. But it is self-sacrificing love that Christ exemplified. He quotes GS out of context:

For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in His Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured, when Christ hands over to the Father: “a kingdom eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.” On this earth that Kingdom is

³²⁷ DV, 8.

³²⁸ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 44.

³²⁹ He uses the work of Richard McBrien to support his position here.

³³⁰ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 45.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² GS, 38.

already present in mystery. When the Lord returns it will be brought into full flower.³³³

Groome's dependence on a Christology from below prevents him from coming to terms with Christ in his fullness. While he refers to Christ as the crucified and resurrected one and as the definitive agent of God's kingdom, the kingdom becomes more important than Christ.

The Kingdom comes to us in our present as a responsibility and a promise. As promise, it is our sure hope that good will finally triumph over evil, and life over death. In this it is a consolation and a comfort. But the Kingdom also comes to us as a radical responsibility and a critique of our present response as individuals, as Church, and as human community.³³⁴

The personal relationship and union with Jesus, the highest aim of catechesis, is absent from *CRE*. "Communion with God and adherence to him entail the carrying out of human responsibilities and the duty of solidarity, since all these things are in keeping with the will of God the Savior (cf. GS, 4)."³³⁵ Vatican II stressed that communion is the deepest vocation of the Church—communion with Christ. "For all of us, who are sons of God and constitute one family in Christ, as long as we remain in communion with one another in mutual charity and in one praise of the most holy Trinity, are corresponding with the intimate vocation of the Church and partaking in foretaste the liturgy of consummate glory."³³⁶

Groome states that the "Church must exist for the sake of the Kingdom"³³⁷ The Church says, "Christians of the first centuries said, 'The world was created for the sake of the Church.' God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life, a communion brought about by the 'convocation' of men in Christ, and this 'convocation' is the Church."³³⁸ Groome defined the Church as, "*a community of those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who ratify that faith by baptism, and who manifest the kingdom of God as preached by Jesus, by*

³³³ GS, 39.

³³⁴ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 45.

³³⁵ GCD, 23.

³³⁶ LG, 11.

³³⁷ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 46.

³³⁸ CCC, 760, Pastor Hermae, *Vision* 2, 4, 1: PG 2,899; cf. Aristides, *Apol.* 16, 6; St. Justin, *Apol.* 2, 7: PG 6, 456; Tertullian, *Apol.* 31, 3; 32, 1: PL 1, 508-509.

proclaiming the word, celebrating in sacrament, and living in deed the Kingdom already and the kingdom promised.”³³⁹ His definition begins with man and ends with man.

Augustine wrote, “Do you understand brothers, the grace of Christ our head? Wonder at it, rejoice; we have become Christ. For if he is the head, we are the members; He and we form the whole man...the fullness of Christ, therefore; the head and the members. What is the head and the members? Christ and the Church.”³⁴⁰ Pius XII wrote, “We must accustom ourselves to see Christ Himself in the Church. For it is indeed Christ Himself who lives in the Church, and through her he teaches, governs, and sanctifies; and it is Christ who manifests in Himself in manifold guise in the various members of His society.”³⁴¹

LG is insistent on the nature of Christ and the Kingdom. “Before all things, however, the Kingdom is clearly visible in the very Person of Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, who came ‘to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.’”³⁴² Groome does not refer to the Church as the Body of Christ, as referenced frequently by St. Paul. “He continually distributes in His body, that is, in the Church, gifts of ministries in which, by His own power, we serve each other unto salvation so that, carrying out the truth in love, we might through all things grow unto Him who is our Head (Eph. 4:11-16).”³⁴³

In *Novo Millennio*, John Paul wrote,

God of course asks us really to cooperate with his grace, and therefore invites us to invest all our resources of intelligence and energy in serving the cause of the Kingdom. But it is fatal to forget that “without Christ we can do nothing” (cf. *Jn* 15:5).

It is prayer which roots us in this truth. It constantly reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in union with him, the primacy of the interior life and of holiness. When this principle is not respected, is it any wonder that pastoral

³³⁹ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 46.

³⁴⁰ Quoted in *Ecclesiam Suam*, 35, *In Io. Tract.* 21.8; PL 35. 1568.

³⁴¹ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, 93.

³⁴² *LG*, 5.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7.

plans come to nothing and leave us with a disheartening sense of frustration?³⁴⁴

“As he invited decision in his own time, so he invites decision in our time: to seek first the Kingdom of God as he modeled and preached it.”³⁴⁵

Groome asserts that that seeking the Kingdom requires specific actions, as does the Church. “For two thousand years this sentiment has lived and endured in the soul of the Church, impelling souls then and now to the heroic charity of monastic farmers, liberators of slaves, healers of the sick, and messengers of faith, civilization, and science to all generations and all peoples for the sake of creating the social conditions capable of offering to everyone possible a life worthy of man and of a Christian.”³⁴⁶

Jesus’ desired his followers to, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”³⁴⁷ The kingdom, not Christ, becomes the central object. However, in seeking the kingdom,

Jesus asks for childlike abandonment to the providence of our heavenly Father who takes care of his children’s smallest needs: ‘Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.’³⁴⁸

Groome’s kingdom-seeking is manifested only in action. “It is useless to play off orthopraxis against orthodoxy: Christianity is inseparably both. Firm and well thought out convictions lead to courageous and upright action, the endeavor to educate the faithful to live as disciples of Christ today calls for and facilitates a

³⁴⁴ Novo Millennio Ineunte, 38.

³⁴⁵ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 46.

³⁴⁶ Pius XII, Discourse June 1, 1941.

³⁴⁷ “If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (Jn. 15: 1-11).

discovery in depth of the mystery of Christ in the history of salvation. ³⁴⁹ John Paul expressed a concern for catechesis that rests only in personal experience, “It is also quite useless to campaign for the abandonment of serious and orderly study of the message of Christ in the name of a method concentrating on life experience. ‘No one can arrive at the whole truth on the basis solely of some simple private experience, that is to say, without an adequate explanation of the message of Christ, who is ‘the way, and the truth, and the life’ (Jn. 14:6).”³⁵⁰. He does believe that experience has a place in catechesis.

Authentic catechesis is always an orderly and systematic initiation into the revelation that God has given of Himself to humanity in Christ Jesus...This revelation is not however isolated from life or artificially juxtaposed to it. It is concerned with the ultimate meaning of life and it illumines the whole of life with the light of the Gospel, to inspire it or to question it.³⁵¹

For Groome, the incarnation was an act of divine praxis-the Word became flesh in time and space.³⁵²

Rather than being a God who is to be reached by removing oneself from the human arena, the incarnate Son is the supreme sign for Christians of a God who acts within history and can be truly known in our actions of loving service...We could thus expect that the young Christian community would give priority to the lived, practical life of Christian virtue as the most authentic way of coming to know the Lord, and would employ such a relational, experiential, and active way of knowing in educational ministry.³⁵³

Groome makes no reference to Christ’s presence in the liturgy.

To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, “the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross” (20), but especially under the eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes (21). He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).³⁵⁴

³⁴⁸ CCC, 305.

³⁴⁹ CT, 22.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 158.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7

Method

In a more determined manner than the *GCD*, the *GDC* placed methodology within the context of the pedagogy of God. Inductive/deductive pedagogical approaches and experience are couched in terms of revelation, “From this point of view, experience is a necessary medium for exploring and assimilating the truths which constitute the objective content of Revelation.”³⁵⁵ It also gives the catechist a mandate:

The above functions indicate that experience, assumed by faith, becomes in a certain manner, a *locus* for the manifestation and realization of salvation, where God, consistently with the pedagogy of the Incarnation, reaches man with his grace and saves him. The catechist must teach the person to read his own lived experience in this regard, so as to, accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to conversion, to commitment, to hope, and to discover more and more in his life God’s plan for him.³⁵⁶

Experience itself is not self-absorbed, but directed toward salvation through grace, faith, and conversion, made possible in the Incarnation and accessible in the sacraments. Such considerations are absent from Groome and Moran’s concept of experience, despite their concern for social justice. Do they, as Mother Teresa often said, “serve Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor.”

Their desire for inductive-only religious education is misdirected. They remain horizontal, and do not ascend to Christ, ignoring the tenets of the *GCD*, which states that the inductive approach “offers great advantages. It serves in the presentation of facts (such as biblical events, liturgical actions, the life of the Church, and daily life) and in the consideration and examination of those facts in order that in them may be recognized the meaning they have in the Christian mystery.”³⁵⁷ “This method is in harmony with the economy of revelation and with one of the fundamental processes of the human spirit, one that comes to grasp intelligible realities through visible things, and also with the particular characteristic of knowledge of the faith, that is, a knowing through signs.”³⁵⁸

Simultaneously, “The deductive method is used in interpreting and explaining the facts by proceeding from their causes. The deductive synthesis usually manifests its

³⁵⁵ *GDC*, 152.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ *GCD*, 72.

full force, however, when the inductive process has already been carried out.”³⁵⁹ The use of both methods simultaneously is reminiscent of the Divine pedagogy, in which God speaks to man where he is, reveals himself in ways that he can understand, and invites a response of faith. It is worth repeating a passage seen before.

Therefore, catechesis should be concerned with making men attentive to their more significant experiences, both personal and social; it also has the duty of placing under the light of the Gospel the questions which arise from those experiences, so that there may be stimulated within men a right desire to transform their ways of life. In this fashion, experience also makes men respond in an active way to the gift of God.³⁶⁰

Ratzinger made reference to specific tendencies that he felt were responsible for the failure of catechesis. It was

...necessary to limit oneself to questions for beginners rather instead of looking for ways to go beyond to things not yet understood. Yet this latter is the only method which positively modifies man and the world. Thus, the faith’s potential for change was paralyzed. From that point, practical theology was no longer understood as a concrete development of dogmatic or systematic theology but as having value in itself. This corresponds perfectly with the new tendency to subordinate theory to praxis, which in the context of Neo-Marxist and positivist philosophies was making headway even in theology.³⁶¹

At the time of his address shared Christian praxis was a highly used source for catechetical methodology. The word “shared” has had a controversial history of its own in religious education. It connotes a “touchy/feely” kind of religious education. Farey writes that this does not have to be the case.

For example, ‘transmitting’ can be described as a ‘passive imparting’ of beliefs contrasted with the dynamism of ‘sharing’ a lived and living faith. On the other hand, ‘Sharing’ can be described as vague, subjective and limited compared to the ‘handing on’ of the living faith in the universal Church. In fact, the Church understands all these words in a positive sense and ‘does not have a particular method nor any single method.’³⁶²

She supports the Church’s desire that the faith be handed on.

We know how the first words of Church documents, taken as the title, are normally chosen deliberately to indicate the key message or content of the

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ GCD 74

³⁶¹ Ratzinger, “The Transmission of the Faith and the Sources of the Faith.” 19.

³⁶² Farey, “The Vocation of the Catechist”, 305.

whole text. Linked, then, to ‘evangelisation’ and ‘catechesis’ are two verbs indicating the need for action - evangelisation is needed that the good news be ‘announced’. As St. Paul says, ‘faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ. Catechesis is needed that the faith of the Church be ‘handed on’. As St. Paul says, “I delivered to you what I also received.” These are essential elements of the mission of the Church and hence the vocation of the catechist.³⁶³

The praxis developed by Groome is almost a secondary issue after looking at his position on so many fundamental issues in the Church’s understanding of catechesis. It is an anti-doctrinal approach despite the fact that Groome uses words like “grace,” “sin” “incarnation” “salvation”, etc. Could his redefinition of basic teachings be construed as rejection. Does his insistence on education as “leading out of” instead of catechesis’ “handing on” mean that religious education is to lead Christian’s out of their bondage to oppressors – the Church?

Components of a Shared Christian Praxis Approach

Groome uses Vision and Story “as symbols to refer to the whole faith tradition of the Christian people, however it is embodied or expressed. And to the lived response the Story invites as it points to the fulfillment of God’s reign.”³⁶⁴

The first necessity for praxis is group dialogue. Within this dialogue, “is an articulation of critical reflection upon one’s present active engagement in the world as a Christian.”³⁶⁵ He means, “That present engagement is in fact the embodiment of one’s own story and vision, and critical reflection upon it takes place in light of the Christian communities’ Story and the response which the Story invites.”³⁶⁶

Subsequently, “This requires that the Story and the Vision be made available in the pedagogical context. The *telos* or end of it all is further Christian praxis that is faithful to the Story and its creative Vision.”³⁶⁷ There is no reference to revelation, and faith is not the response despite Groome’s definition of Vision and Story.³⁶⁸

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 29, nt. 16. Groome capitalized these words throughout this work.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 184.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Patrick Purnell, SJ wrote, “...I am not asking you to believe me, I want you to listen to the story I tell. If it is a good story you will recognize the truth because it will echo within your own experience: you will say, ‘That’s what I feel!’ ‘That makes sense!’ And when and where this does not happen, you

To do this Groome “understands” there to be five main components in Christian education by shared praxis: 1) present action 2) critical reflection 3) dialogue 4) the Story and 5) the Vision that arrives from the Story.

Present action

Present action requires reflection on the engagement with the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual world. “Since the action rises from the self, the primary object of reflection is the self who reflects. All reflection is primarily self-reflection because when we reflect upon our activity, we are in fact reflecting upon the self that is expressed in such activity.”³⁶⁹ No reflection was to begin with “they say,” that is too much like the *theoria* epistemology, and therefore one would fall into the theory into practice way of knowing. Even though the reflection is on the self, “it is *ultimately* on the social context by which the self comes to self identity.”³⁷⁰ His definition of the word “present” is a past present, a present present, and a future present. “By reflecting on present action, we can uncover the ‘pasts’ that have brought us to such action, and raise to consciousness the ‘futures’ in that action by becoming aware of its likely or intended consequence.”³⁷¹

Critical Reflection

This involves three actions:

- 1) critical reason to evaluate the present: critically apprehend the obvious, rather than passively accept it. “By a critical evaluative analysis we can attempt to discover the interest in present action, critique the ideology that maintains it, and recognize the basic assumption upon which it is based.”³⁷²
- 2) critical memory to uncover the past in the present: “The remembering cannot be a facile calling to mind...*critical* memory is needed to break open the hardened shell of the past in the present, so as to prevent it from determining the present.”³⁷³ Through this one can discover the ‘personal and social genesis’ of our present action. Without this, “our stories are forgotten, and the world is named for us.” It is incomplete if it rests only on reason and memory.

must share your experience with me, because together we are trying to tell a story about a God whom we have made our own and who has made us God’s people” *Our Faith Story, Its Telling and its Sharing* (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1985), 27.

³⁶⁹ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 185.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid., 186.

“The purpose of naming our present and knowing our story is that we may have some freedom to imagine and choose our future.”³⁷⁴

- 3) creative imagination to envision the future in the present: its focus is the future, imagination is a “creative and shaping activity that gives intentionality to the future as it arises out of the present and the past.”³⁷⁵ It is an expression of hope, which “makes the real seem less real than it is, and the imagined more real that it is already.”³⁷⁶ Imagination is a necessary if education is to be a “leading out”, “so much of our educational efforts stifle the imagination of the participants, telling them what to think and how to think it.”³⁷⁷

He adds one more point to “critical reflection”, in which he focuses on the words themselves. In his process, reflection is both rational and affective, an affair of “both the heart and the head.” Critical is not meant to be negative, it “affirms what is good and true in present action, recognizes its limitations, and attempts to move beyond it.”³⁷⁸

Dialogue

“Dialogue is especially necessary...the whole content and process of a shared praxis approach is to be dialogical.”³⁷⁹ Groome holds that the dialogue begins with the self – biography, story, and vision. To be truly known, it must be shared with others, and “they must be heard if we are to know more clearly our own stories and vision.”³⁸⁰ It is subject-to-subject, a telling/ listening as he phrases it. “If the dialogue is an expressing/hearing of our reflective stories and visions, then there is in it for everyone the possibility of discovering much more than we set out to disclose.”³⁸¹ “But dialogue requires that the Story and its vision be made available in a *disclosure* rather than a *closure* manner. This means that it cannot be imposed upon the participants monologically, but must be made available in a way that invites dialogue with the tradition from their own lived experience.”³⁸² In his experience, “telling one’s story and vision and attempting to name one’s world elicit a sense of reverence on the part

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 187.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 188.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 189.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid.

of the listeners.”³⁸³ He does not “name” the object of the reverence. The dialogue, “cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s ‘depositing’ ideas in another, nor can it become a single exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants.”³⁸⁴ Groome lists Feiere’s requirements of dialogue:

- Dialogue cannot exist without profound love for the world and for men;
- It requires humility, and cannot be an act of arrogance;
- It requires and intense faith in man, faith in his power to make and remake, to create and re-create;
- It requires hope, a hope that is aware of our incompleteness but does not settle for silence, it is active, but not impatient, it cannot succeed in a climate of hopelessness;
- Authentic dialogue requires critical thinking.³⁸⁵

Groome added “The last point to be made is that the dialogue is not only among the participants but also between the participants and God....very often when listening to a participant tell his or her story, I and other participants have found our inner dialogue merging into dialogue with God. On many occasions shared Christian praxis groups have reached a point of shared prayer together (sometimes taking a liturgical form) as the most fitting response to what is being shared.”³⁸⁶ In the end “the participants reflect upon and share the stories and visions embodied in the present action, and those stories and visions are critiqued in the light of the faith tradition of Christianity (Story) and the promise of and response invited by that tradition (Vision).”³⁸⁷

The Story

“*Scripture* and *tradition* could be used to convey what I intend by the metaphor *Story*. But these are so over laden with the memory of past polemics (scripture or tradition) and divisive feuds among Christians that I am reluctant to use them here.”³⁸⁸ He asserts the Story is not narrative, although it can be part of it. “By Christian Story

³⁸³ Ibid., 190.

³⁸⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 190.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 191.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

I mean *the whole faith tradition of our people however that is expressed or embodied.*”³⁸⁹

The Vision that arrives from the Story

“I intend the metaphor Vision to be a comprehensive representation of the lived response which the Christian Story invites and the promise God makes in the story.”³⁹⁰ Vision and Story are part of the same reality, “the Vision is our response to God’s promise in the Story, and the story is unfolding of the Vision.”³⁹¹ It is difficult to determine what he really means by this. It certainly is not a novel reconfiguration of Divine Revelation/response of faith. He continues, “The Christian Story and Vision find expression, though not perfectly, in a community of Christian faith. They can be encountered there in the reflectively lived and shared faith of the whole community.”³⁹²

If everyone is sharing his/her own reflection, how can he/she arrive at a common language that allows him/her to share in a way that can move the hearers to a deeper response to God? Since Groome is not concerned with that response, this process only makes sense because of the human need for community. “In the community encounter between our own stories and the Story, between our own visions and the Vision, we can come to ‘know God’ in an experiential/reflective manner.”³⁹³ He summarized, “It will be a praxis way of knowing that arises from our own praxis, from the praxis of our community of pilgrims in time, and from the praxis of God in history.”³⁹⁴ Groome has arrived at a totally anthropocentric position in which God’s self-revelation, ultimately in the Incarnation, has no place.

Shared Christian Praxis in Praxis

This methodology serves neither revelation nor conversion.³⁹⁵ John Paul II stressed that the choice of a methodology “will be a valid one to the extent that, far from being dictated by more or less subjective theories or prejudices stamped with a certain

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 192

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 193.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ CT, 51.

ideology, it is inspired by the humble concern to stay closer to a content that must remain intact. The method and language used must truly be means for communicating the whole and not just a part of 'the words of eternal life' and the 'ways of life.'"³⁹⁶

None of the Church's terminology is recognizable in Groome's "naming." Original approaches are appropriate, but "the supreme rule is that the great advances in the science of language must be capable of being placed at the service of catechesis so as to enable it really to 'tell' or 'communicate' to the child, the adolescent, the young people and adults of today the whole content of doctrine without distortion."³⁹⁷

Other essential elements are missing from Groome's praxis. One is any direct reference to love for the person being catechized, as demonstrated in the pedagogy of Jesus, Paul and Augustine. In desiring only that the person shares their story, the deep desire for their salvation is not present. "In the lives of those who, sharing in our humanity, are however more perfectly transformed into the image of Christ, God vividly manifests His presence and His face to men. He speaks to us in them, and gives us a sign of His Kingdom, to which we are strongly drawn, having so great a cloud of witnesses over us and such a witness to the truth of the Gospel."³⁹⁸

St. John Bosco

St. John Bosco's method was called the "preventive system." "It inclines the educator to love the young person in whatever state he may be found, so as to lead him to the fullness of humanity which is revealed in Christ, to give him the awareness and possibility of living the life of an upright citizen as a son of God. It leads to intuitive understanding and gives strength to what the Saint summed up in the threefold formula: 'Reason, Religion, and Kindness.'"³⁹⁹ John Paul II advises, "It will be well to keep in mind the new lines of thought and the developments that have taken place in many fields, the signs of the times and the indications of Vatican II. Nevertheless the substance of his teaching remains in tact; the unique nature of his spirit, his intuitions, his style, his charisma is unchanged, because they draw their inspiration

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 31.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 59.

³⁹⁸ LG, 50.

from the transcendent pedagogy of God.⁴⁰⁰ Finally, “I want especially to consider in Don Bosco the fact that he realized personal holiness through the educative commitment lived with zeal and an apostolic heart, and that at the same time he knew how to propose holiness as the practical objective of his pedagogy.”⁴⁰¹ This goal seems to be present in Moran and Groome’s work, but only in their desire for social justice which is a chimera of life rooted in Christ and his sacraments.

“The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consumator of this holiness of life.”⁴⁰² The *GCD* reiterates, “Now what was handed on by the apostles includes everything which contributes to the holiness of life and the increase in faith of the People of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life, and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes” (DV, 8).⁴⁰³

Bosco’s desire was “Give me souls; away with the rest.”⁴⁰⁴ Isoardi held that the salvation of souls was the sole motivator of Don Bosco’s catechesis. “Don Bosco always kept up a constructive and real dialogue with young people, elaborating a plan based on a common interest, ‘I have something very important to tell you. I want you to help me in a matter that I have very much at heart: your eternal salvation. This is not the main reason-it is the only reason - why I am here. Without your help, however, I can do nothing. We must be of one mind in this and real friendship and mutual confidence must unite us’”⁴⁰⁵ Bosco gave a very simple reply to those who asked him his method, “By means of affection, gain the heart of youth.”⁴⁰⁶

John Henry Newman

³⁹⁹ John Paul II, “A Master in Education,” Letter of the Supreme Pontiff II to the Reverend Edidio Vigano, Rector major of the Society of St. Francis de Sales for the Centenary of the death of St. John Bosco, 1988, 9.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁰² *LG*, 40.

⁴⁰³ *GCD*, 13.

⁴⁰⁴ John Morrison, *The Educational Philosophy of St John Bosco* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Salesiana Publishers, 1979), 47.

⁴⁰⁵ (MB VII, 303). Gian Carlo Isoardi, *Don Bosco the Catechist*, (New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Publications, 1981), 3.

⁴⁰⁶ Morrison, *The Educational Philosophy of St John Bosco*, 51.

Newman was a contemporary of Bosco. He addressed the religion of his day. “This is the religion *natural* to a civilized age, and well Satan dressed and completed it into an idol of the Truth. As the reason is cultivated, the taste formed, the affections and sentiments refined, a general decency and grace will of course spread over the face of society, quite independent of the influence of Revelation.”⁴⁰⁷ He could be describing Moran, Groome and their contemporaries. “Everything is pleasant and easy; benevolence is the chief virtue, intolerance, bigotry, excess of zeal, are the first sins.”⁴⁰⁸ Newman regards them ‘at the bottom’ as good Christians.

Still, after all, here is an existing teaching, only partly evangelical, built upon worldly principle, yet pretending to be the Gospel, its austere character, and considering it enough to be benevolent, courteous, correct in conduct, delicate, - though it includes no true fear of God, no fervent zeal for His honour, no deep hatred of sin, no horror at the sight of sinners, no indignations and compassion at the blasphemies of heretics, no jealous adherence to doctrinal truth, no especial sensitiveness about the particular means of gaining ends, provided the ends be good, no loyalty to the Holy Apostolic Church, of which the Creed speaks, no sense of the authority of religion as external to the mind; in a word, no seriousness,- and therefore is neither hot nor cold, but (in Scriptural language) lukewarm.”⁴⁰⁹

After his diaconal ordination, Newman wrote,

It is over. I am Thine, O Lord; I seem quite dizzy and cannot altogether believe and understand it. At first, after the hands were laid on me, my heart shuddered within me; the words ‘for ever’ are terrible... Yet, Lord, I ask not for comfort in comparison of sanctification. I feel as a man thrown suddenly in deep water. ‘For ever’ words never to be recalled, I have the responsibility of souls on me to the day of my death.⁴¹⁰

After the completion of his education at Oxford (Trinity), Newman was elected Fellow at Oriel College in 1822. He felt that it was in his purview, supported by the statutes of the College, to concern himself with the moral education of the young men in his care. Newman was horrified, especially when the young men attended drunken parties before and after their general communion. In Newman’s plan, “Each tutor was to be responsible for a certain group of pupils, and they were to have first claim on his attention, for classes and for (unpaid) coaching. This superintendence would make

⁴⁰⁷ Newman, “The Religion of the Day,” Sermon 24 in *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997; orig. pub. London: Longman, Green, and Company, 1891), 199.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 200-01.

possible a certain moral supervision also”⁴¹¹ In other words, Newman sought to pastor his students through his personal influence, as did some of his fellow tutors. Provost Hawkins thought this plan smacked of favoritism and told them to cease. Newman continued. Hawkins saw to it that he was given no more students, which ultimately ended in his resignation as tutor.⁴¹²

The Church desires the witness of her catechists. This witness is not clearly found in Groome’s methodology, or in Moran’s thinking. Neither calls for the deep personal relationship with Christ that would be necessary for such witness.

Newman is rarely used in the context of catechesis. This is lamentable, for he has a great deal to say to the Church in the 21st century. His sermon, “Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating the Truth” provides a means to rectify the current state of catechesis in which the basic teachings have been taught deficiently.

“This being the state of the question, it is proposed to consider, whether the influence of Truth in the world at large does not arise from *the personal influence*, direct and indirect, of those who are commissioned to teach it.”⁴¹³ Newman points to the personal holiness of the teacher, and of his obedience:

Even with these few considerations before us, we shall find it difficult to estimate the moral power which a single individual, trained to practice what he teaches, may acquire in his own circle, in the course of years. While the Scriptures are thrown upon the world, as if the common property of any who choose to appropriate them, he is, in fact, the legitimate interpreter of them, and none other; the Inspired Word being but a dead letter (ordinarily considered), except as transmitted from one mind to another.⁴¹⁴

Newman asserts that this person is unknown to the world, and others more popular, but their greatness is seen only from a distance. On the other hand, the true teacher of the truth, “While he is unknown to the world, yet, within the range of those who see

⁴¹⁰ Quoted in Trevor, *Newman, The Pillar of the Cloud*, 48.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴¹² Newman wrote of Hawkins, “I can say with a full heart that I love him, and have never ceased to love him; and I thus preface what otherwise might sound rude, that in the course of the many years in which we were together afterwards, he provoked me very much from time to time, though I am perfectly certain that I have provoked him a great deal more” (*Apologia*, 28).

⁴¹³ Sermon 5, “Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating the Truth,” 8, in *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 79.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33; *Fifteen Sermons*, 94.

him, he will become the object of feelings different in kind from those which mere intellectual excellence excites...but the attraction, exerted by unconscious holiness, is of an urgent and irresistible nature.⁴¹⁵ The result:

it persuades the weak, the timid, the wavering, and the inquiring; it draws forth the affection and loyalty of all who are in a measure like-minded; and over the thoughtless or perverse multitude it exercises a sovereign compulsory sway... its hereditary claim on their obedience, though they understand not the principles or counsels of that spirit, which is 'born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'⁴¹⁶

Newman asks if that is the response of an audience of mixed attitudes, what will the effect be on those who have heard a personal invitation in the example of the Teacher of Truth. "And these, too, are they who are ordained in God's Providence to be the salt of the earth,—to continue, in their turn, the succession of His witnesses, that heirs may never be wanting to the royal line though death sweeps away each successive generation of them to their rest and their reward."⁴¹⁷

Conclusion

Hofinger believed that person must be a true Christian to have the right attitude toward methods. "As soon as we desire to be nothing but instruments of Christ- but to be his perfect instruments - clearly we shall want to do our work as well as possible. And therefore we shall be eager to use every means that may help to perfect our teaching. But at the same time we shall never become slaves to methods."⁴¹⁸

The pedagogy of Christ has been the model of pedagogy for the two millennia of the Church. For most of its history, people have acted in good faith applying the Gospel and the Church's teaching in ways they thought best. In the ebb and flow of a lived-out Christianity, Church leadership caused or suffered from the effects of poor catechesis. The Council fostered renewal in part by looking at the early Church. This *ressourcement* was also applied to catechetics. The Magisterium of the Church looked to Christ to determine how to make catechesis most effective in the Church,

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.; *Fifteen Sermons*, 95.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 34; *Fifteen Sermons*, 95.

⁴¹⁸ Hofinger and Buckley, *The Good News and Its Proclamation*, 13.

including the re-establishment of the catechumenate. There were many examples of fidelity to the deposit of faith and devotion to the needs of the person before them.

In careful study of the renewal of catechesis as regards methodology, it is apparent that the leaders in that area, especially Thomas Groome, had no desire to return to the sources, including *the* Source, Jesus Christ. The result of these deviations from the mind of the Church has resulted in content-less catechesis whose center is in effect the person being “taught,” rather than the Person of Christ. The desire for little content in catechesis resulted in the deficiencies in textbooks. Poor methodology that denied the Christocentric nature of catechesis would, in some cases, not notice that there was no real content.

Chapter V

Conclusion

In remarks closing the Council, Paul VI made the seriousness of the Council decrees very clear.

We decided moreover that all that has been established synodally is to be religiously observed by all the faithful, for the glory of God and the dignity of the Church and for the tranquillity and peace of all men. We have approved and established these things, decreeing that the present letters are and remain stable and valid, and are to have legal effectiveness, so that they be disseminated and obtain full and complete effect, and so that they may be fully convalidated by those whom they concern or may concern now and in the future; and so that, as it be judged and described, all efforts contrary to these things by whomever or whatever authority, knowingly or in ignorance be invalid and worthless from now on.¹

The cause of the ten doctrinal deficiencies found in religious education textbooks is simple. It has been noted that many of those who were pre-eminent in religious education avoided those points of doctrine: the treatment of the Trinity, of Christ especially his divinity, the ecclesial nature of catechesis, Christian anthropology, on God's initiative in the world with an overemphasis on man's, grace, sacraments, original sin and sin in general, Christian moral life, and eschatology.

Simultaneously it is complex because there were so many influences on catechesis after the Council. Neither John XXIII, Paul VI nor any bishop who attended the Council could have predicted its effect on the life of the Church in regards to doctrine. It could be assumed from its pastoral nature that they considered the deposit of faith safe, unlike the other ecumenical councils. However the support that some gave to those engaged in suspect theological or catechetical renewal could negate that assumption.

These influences can be reduced to ten:

- rejection or misappropriation of the Council in its desire to guard the deposit;
- rejection of *ressourcement*;
- redefinition of the major tenets of doctrine-the hypostatic union, revelation, faith, Church, Magisterium;

¹ Paul VI, Apostolic Brief, "*In Spiritu Sancto*" For the Closing of the Council - December 8, 1965.

- lack of emphasis on the soteriological and eschatological nature of catechesis;
- reduction of the Christocentric nature of catechesis to an anthropocentric one;
- rejection of a kerygmatic approach rooted in salvation history;
- substitution of religious education for catechesis;
- abdication of the bishops in their role as the chief catechists of their dioceses;
- failure of the American bishops to rectify the catechetical disaster;
- dissent.

Many of these influences cross the line from speculation to heresy, the greatest threat to the Church. Recall that Belloc saw heresy as “the dislocation of some complete and self-supporting scheme by the introduction of a novel denial of some essential part therein.”² He also concluded that heresy was the “warping of a system by ‘Exception’: by ‘Picking out’ one part of the structure and implies that the scheme is marred by taking away one part of it, denying one part of it, and wither leaving the void unfilled or filling it with some new affirmation.”³ This practice has been noted among several of the works analyzed in this study.

This was not a new phenomenon. In 1835 Gregory XVI was similarly concerned:

...to add to our bitter sorrow we see some entering even into the study of theology who, through a desire and passion for novelty ‘ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth’ [2 Tim. 3:7], are teachers of error, because they have not been disciples of truth. In fact, they infect sacred studies with strange and unapproved doctrines, and they do not hesitate to profane even the office of teacher, if they hold a position in the schools and academies; they are known to falsify the most sacred deposit of faith itself, while boasting that they are protecting it.⁴

John Paul urged theologians to look to Bonaventure and refrain from "reading without repentance, knowledge without devotion, research without the impulse of wonder, prudence without the ability to surrender to joy, action divorced from religion,

² Belloc, *The Great Heresies*, 2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gregory XVI, *Dum acerbissimas* (1835), (Rome: *Acta Gregorii XVI*, 1901), Vol. II, p. 85. Sept. 26, 1835]. Quoted in Kevane, “Jesus the Divine Teacher”, *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, December 1982), 13.

learning sundered from love, intelligence without humility, study unsustained by divine grace, thought without the wisdom inspired by God.”⁵

Rejection or Misappropriation of the Council

The four Constitutions of the Council offer the fundamentals of the faith concerning God and man, and their relationship through Christ and his Church. “Christ is *the Light of nations*. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, to bring the light of Christ to all men, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church.”⁶

The protagonists of the radical departure from the pedagogy of God and the deposit of faith often ignored *Lumen Gentium*:

In the present era of time the Church was constituted and, by the outpouring of the Spirit, was made manifest. At the end of time it will gloriously achieve completion, when, as is read in the Fathers, all the just, from Adam and ‘from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect,’ will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church.⁷

The Father sent the Son, the Word was made flesh. “By His obedience He brought about redemption. The Church, or, in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world. This inauguration and this growth are both symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of a crucified Jesus, and are foretold in the words of the Lord referring to His death on the Cross: ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself’.”⁸

Christ continues to draw all things to himself. “As often as the sacrifice of the cross in which ‘Christ our Passover was sacrificed’, is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried on, and, in the sacrament of the eucharistic bread, the unity of all believers who form one body in Christ is both expressed and brought about. All

⁵ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*; *Prologus*, 4: *Opera Omnia*, Florence, 1891, vol. V, 296. Quoted in John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 105.

⁶ *LG*, 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

men are called to this union with Christ, who is the light of the world, from whom we go forth, through whom we live, and toward whom our whole life strains.”⁹

They ignored the desire of the Council:

Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. This it intends to do following faithfully the teaching of previous councils.¹⁰

The sacraments and the liturgy were also ignored. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* stressed “...the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.”¹¹

Seeking the kingdom cannot therefore be a purely horizontal activity.

In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory.¹²

The rejection of the tenets of *Dei Verbum* has already been covered in great detail, the protagonists of renewal often repudiated Scripture and Tradition as well as the Magisterium's right and duty to exercise authority over it. They reconstruct the Council's assertion that the deepest meaning of the Church is that it cannot exist apart from Jesus Christ. They do emphasize *Gaudium et Spes*, but only its discussion of man, which they take out of context. They frequently refer to the passage,

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹¹ SC, 10.

¹² Ibid., 8.

“Christ...fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.”¹³

They take it out of context:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown.¹⁴

Failure to Engage in *Ressourcement*

Lumen Gentium discussed the nature of the Church by “following faithfully the teaching of previous councils.”¹⁵ The Council always looked to three sources: the Gospel, the teaching of Christ handed on to the Church through the Apostles; the teaching of the Fathers of the Church; and previous Councils. It also looked to the Scholastics, and to the writings of many of the Popes and Bishops of the Church. In this “looking back” to the sources they looked to the present and future, exercising a development of doctrine, which was also discussed in previous chapters. “For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her.”¹⁶

In addition to this, the protagonists often fail to look at, “the lives of those who, sharing in our humanity, are however more perfectly transformed into the image of Christ, God vividly manifests His presence and His face to men. He speaks to us in them, and gives us a sign of His Kingdom, to which we are strongly drawn, having so great a cloud of witnesses over us and such a witness to the truth of the Gospel.”¹⁷

Redefinition of Doctrine

This was done by commission and omission. In order to validate the practice of deviation from Church teaching, Moran and Groome often redefined doctrine. Moran’s major omission was his final declaration that revelation did not exist. Simultaneously it was a commission- rejection of Christ as the fullness of revelation,

¹³ *GS*, 22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *LG* 1

¹⁶ *DV*, 8.

and the source of all Church teaching. As theologians they were free to speculate on the nature of Church teaching or its development, but they sought to be autonomous, removing themselves from the authority of the Magisterium. Groome's penchant for "naming" had a similar result, even though he does not directly address specific doctrinal points, he has erred by omission.

Omission of the Soteriological and Eschatological Nature of Catechesis

None of the protagonists were rooted in salvation. Their redefinition or rejection of revelation allows them to speak of the Christian life from a horizontal position rooted in the present. Revelation was not directed toward salvation. A low Christology cannot emphasize, " For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."¹⁸ The kingdom, residing in the here and now does not accentuate man's seeking his ultimate end, union with God in the eternal kingdom. Sin is almost never addressed, so any emphasis on the "four last things" (death judgment, heaven, and hell) is unnecessary. However, "The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world."¹⁹

Reduction of Christocentric Nature of Catechesis to an Anthropocentric One

This too has received attention in previous chapters. "But what is man? About himself he has expressed, and continues to express, many divergent and even contradictory opinions. In these he often exalts himself as the absolute measure of all things or debases himself to the point of despair. The result is doubt and anxiety."²⁰ There is no need for the Christian to be in such a position. "For Sacred Scripture teaches that man was created 'to the image of God,' is capable of knowing and loving his Creator, and

¹⁷ *LG*, 49.

¹⁸ *Jn* 3:16-17

¹⁹ *CCC*, 677.

²⁰ *GS*, 12.

was appointed by Him as master of all earthly creatures that he might subdue them and use them to God's glory. 'What is man that you should care for him? You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet' (Ps. 8:5-7)."²¹ Consequently, *GS* asserts, "For man would not exist were he not created by Gods love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator. Still, many of our contemporaries have never recognized this intimate and vital link with God, or have explicitly rejected it."²² The overemphasis on man in post-conciliar catechesis resembles this concern of *GS*, which was actually concerned with atheism.

Rejection of a Kerygmatic Approach Rooted in Salvation History

It is not just the devaluation of the work of Jungmann and Hofinger that is the concern here, but the very rejection of the *kerygma* itself, the proclamation of the Gospel.

"But what the Lord preached that one time, or what was wrought in Him for the saving of the human race, must be spread abroad and published to the ends of the earth (Acts 1.8), beginning from Jerusalem (cf. Lk 24.27), so that what He accomplished at that one time for the salvation of all, may in the course of time come to achieve its effect in all."²³

The closing words of *Ad Gentes* are directed to heralds, "The council Fathers together with the Roman Pontiff, feeling deeply their duty to spread everywhere the Kingdom of God, lovingly salute all heralds of the Gospel, and especially those who suffer persecution for the name of Christ, being made partakers of their sufferings. They are afire with that same love with which Christ burned toward men."²⁴ This attitude toward catechists is absent from the writing of most of the protagonists.

Substitution of Catechesis by Religious Education

If the *kerygma* or proclamation of the Good News is absent, catechesis can be reduced from a process aiming at understanding and conversion to that which is purely

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 19.

²³ *AG*, 3.

²⁴ Ibid., 42.

educative, and even then there is nothing educational about a process that consists in merely sharing experiences. "Furthermore, theologians, within the requirements and methods proper to theology, are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the men of their times; for the deposit of Faith or the truths are one thing and the manner in which they are enunciated, in the same meaning and understanding, is another."²⁵ GS listed this in the section entitled, "Some Urgent Duties of Christians in Regard to Culture"²⁶

Abdication of the Bishops

The American Bishops, descended from the Apostles, are also to blame for much that has happened in catechesis. Many of them have failed to fulfill their "duty of teaching-which is conspicuous among the principal duties of bishops - they should announce the Gospel of Christ to men, calling them to a faith in the power of the Spirit or confirming them in a living faith. They should expound the whole mystery of Christ to them, namely, those truths the ignorance of which is ignorance of Christ. At the same time they should point out the divinely revealed way to give glory to God and thereby to attain to eternal happiness."²⁷

The Council was specific, "The bishops should present Christian doctrine in a manner adapted to the needs of the times, that is to say, in a manner that will respond to the difficulties and questions by which people are especially burdened and troubled. They should also guard that doctrine, teaching the faithful to defend and propagate it."²⁸

Their most disastrous abdication was in their failure to censure and remove Charles Curran and other dissenting theologians from CUA, for which they were directly responsible. In some ways, Paul VI is also to blame for allowing the Bishops to abdicate their authority to correct erring theologians and clergy.

Failure of the American Bishops to Rectify the Catechetical Disaster

"Bishops should take pains that catechetical instruction-which is intended to make the faith, as illumined by teaching, a vital, explicit and effective force in the lives of men-

²⁵ GS, 62.

²⁶ Part II, Chapter II, Section 3

²⁷ *Christus Dominus*, 12.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

be given with sedulous care to both children and adolescents, youths and adults.”²⁹ The American bishops tried to do this in *To Teach as Jesus Did* and *Basic Teachings*, but they did very little to enforce them. The granting of an Imprimatur to textbooks should have guaranteed the doctrinal purity of the contents. The *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. In effect, as seen in the language of Buechlein’s report, the doctrines were not heretical but treated in an insufficient or inadequate way. Often it was just omitted.³⁰ It also means that no implication is contained therein that those who have granted the *nihil obstat* and the *imprimatur* agree with the content, opinions, or statements expressed.

However, in textbooks concerned with handing on the faith, the bishop should have been able to agree with its content, the deposit. The bishops should have seen “to it that this instruction is based on Sacred Scripture, tradition, the liturgy, magisterium, and life of the Church.”³¹ Some bishops gave their catechetical duties over to curial staff that had specific expertise in catechesis. “Lay people who belong to the diocesan curia should realize that they are making a helpful contribution to the pastoral ministry of the bishop.”³² This was not always the case. In what Barbara Morgan called the “cult of the experts” curial staff and theologians held sway over many bishops, to the detriment of catechesis.

The promulgation of the *Catechism* was the moment in which the American bishops acted as a body to improve the catechetical situation in the US, by desiring that textbooks be in conformity with it.³³ The 2005 *National Catechetical Directory* was another sign of their seriousness of purpose. It clearly reflects the *GDC*, and seems determined to undo the damage caused by the deficiencies. It does not resort to

²⁹ Ibid., 14.

³⁰ For example, it was very common in Second Grade texts to refer to the Mass as a celebration and a meal. This is not incorrect. However, they consistently failed to call the Mass a sacrifice, a sharing in the Paschal Mystery etc., and failed to recognize the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

³¹ CD, 14.

³² Ibid., 27.

³³ In 1997, I served on the Education Commission of a Midwestern diocese. The Bishop presided over the last meeting of the school year. He talked about the conformity process. I asked him if this endeavor would fall the way of every other attempt of the bishops to do something to the state of religious education. He replied, “Sister, I promise you, this time things are going to be different!” And they were.

generalities, but is specific concerning the points to be covered in discussions of the elements of doctrine that are grouped under the four pillars of the Catechism.

Dissent

Dissent from Church teaching is perhaps the most perfidious of all these influences, because of its determination to deny assent to specific Church teaching. “Dissent sometimes also appeals to a kind of sociological argumentation which holds that the opinion of a large number of Christians would be a direct and adequate expression of the “supernatural sense of the faith.”³⁴

This cannot mean that it is possible to accept conclusions contrary to that mystery and it certainly does not put into question the truth of those assertions by which the Magisterium has declared itself. As to the ‘parallel magisterium’, it can cause great spiritual harm by opposing itself to the Magisterium of the Pastors. Indeed, when dissent succeeds in extending its influence to the point of shaping a common opinion, it tends to become the rule of conduct. This cannot but seriously trouble the People of God and lead to contempt for true authority.³⁵

Sloyan, Moran, Marthaler, Boys, Mongoven and Groome have been major figures in this dissertation. Richard P. McBrien has not been seen as often, but he is connected to these figures. They are interchangeably mentors, students, and colleagues. Their influence on American religious education suggests a “parallel magisterium” that has caused tremendous damage. The first three engaged in formal dissent from *Humanae Vitae*, the others have supported their positions, and other dissenting positions concerning the moral life. Hardon defined dissent as “The theory that a professed Catholic may legitimately disagree with an official teaching of the Catholic Church and, in fact, should disagree in order to advance the Church’s interests.”³⁶ Curran validates this definition, particularly in *Dissent in and for the Church*, published in 1969.³⁷ It is also supported in *The Responsibility of Dissent: The Church and Academic Freedom*, written by the same authors.³⁸ Hardon continues, “Most often

³⁴ *Donum veritatis*, 34;35.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶ Hardon, *Pocket Catholic Dictionary*, 111.

³⁷ Written by Charles E. Curran, Robert E. Hunt and the “Subject Professors” (those CUA professors who dissented from HV), with John E. Hunt and Terrance E. R. Connelly (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969).

³⁸ The configuration of authors changed: John F. Hunt and Terrence R. Connelly with Charles E. Curran, Robert E. Hunt and Robert K. Webb. The subject professor dedicated the volume “to those who joined them in upholding the right of Catholic dissent from *Humanae Vitae*-especially those unjustly accused of disloyalty without benefit of due process.”

the dissent applies to some doctrine of Christian morals which though infallibly true, because taught by the Church's universal ordinary Magisterium, has not been solemnly defined."³⁹ Moran dissented from the Church's teaching on revelation.

It [dissent] was, and it still is today, a social movement within the ranks of theologians that is overtly hostile towards the nature of the magisterium of the as the authentic judge, and guardian of the truth. Characterized by political action and public proclamation, especially through the mass media, its goal is to change the nature of the Church.⁴⁰

There is a new generation of academics working in the field of religious education, Jane Regan, Michael Horan⁴¹ and Richard Gaillardetz. Bill Huebsch has gained fame by developing "Whole Community Catechesis." All four are popular presenters at NCCL and NCEA as well as diocesan gatherings. They resemble those who have gone before them: developing religious education that has very little content, rooted in experience, and walking on the edge of formal dissent. They do engage in passive dissent, rejecting the body of truth that has come from the Church in the *Catechism*, and the directives of the *GDC* and most recently the *NDC*.

"Whole Community Catechesis" is commendable in its intent. It is an attempt at intergenerational catechesis, and focuses on adults, as is the desire of the *GDC*. However, it is merely a reconfiguration of Shared Christian Praxis. In a sample lesson included in *Whole Community Catechesis in Plain English* (dedicated to Bishop Lucker), Huebsch purports to link liturgy to catechesis, and to make catechesis Christ centered. In effect, it looks at the externals of the Sacrament of Baptism – water, candle, white garment, etc, and focuses on "sharing" how they members of the

³⁹ Hardon, *Pocket Catholic Dictionary*, 111-12.

⁴⁰ Toolin, Cynthia "Academic Freedom and the Oath of Fidelity", *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 104 (2004):8

⁴¹ Horan's work has been referenced earlier. I attended his workshop at a NPCD convention. It was on the catechumenal model as the model for all catechesis. He spoke for 45 minutes without mentioning Jesus. When we broke into discussion groups, I mentioned that fact. The group, all professional DRE's, were stunned, they had not noticed. They then concluded I had noted something so esoteric because I taught at university. One thing that he did include in a fantasy trip to the future of catechetical renewal was the practice of dissent. At the 2004 NCCL he gave a workshop on the new National Directory. He spent the much of the time complaining that he had not been consulted during its preparation. In reality, the bishops gave several opportunities for input. They were national and diocesan consultations, as well as input invited specifically from those engaged in religious education at the University level. Jane Regan was in the audience. They constantly interacted with each other as if they had a secret between them that no one in the audience could comprehend. It was unprofessional at the best. After the workshop, I tried to engage him in conversation, academic to academic, in the process over content argument still so prevalent in academic catechist. He answered, "But the process is the most important", and walked away from me.

group *feel* about these things. There is no treatment of the nature of the Paschal Mystery, sacrament, original sin, sanctifying grace, the Trinity, or the sacraments of initiation. It is couched in quotes from the *Catechism* and the *GDC* which appears to give it validity. Huebsch states, “This process helps the whole parish grow! Later, when baptism is routinely celebrated in the Sunday assembly (Mass), everyone involved will have a much better sense of why the celebration of baptism is so important for the community.”⁴² In reality they understand no more than they did before they came, and the deficiencies are being propagated.

Huebsch goes further in the curiously titled *A Radical* Guide for Catholics (*rooted in the essentials of our faith)*. He addresses conscience, contraception, quitting commitments, gay and lesbian relations, etc. It is written as free-style poetry, and dissents from the Church’s position on each of these points. Included in the “praise for this work” section of the book is a recommendation from Robert Nugent, SDS and Jeannine Gramick, SSND who were silenced by the Vatican for their positions on homosexual activity. Among those whom Huebsch thanks are those who were willing to risk everything in search for the truth, including formally silenced theologians Charles Curran, Leonardo Boff, and Matthew Fox.

The most distressing member of the new generation is Richard Gaillardetz. He asserts the right of Catholics to dissent by stressing the “particular authority that believers and the entire believing community possess by reason of their baptism. The Second Vatican Council addressed this in its consideration of the *sensus fidelium*, the “sense of the faithful.”⁴³ The *CDF* wrote, “Dissent sometimes also appeals to a kind of sociological argumentation which holds that the opinion of a large number of Christians would be a direct and adequate expression of the ‘supernatural sense of the faith.’”⁴⁴ The *CDF* stated that the opinions of the faithful cannot be “purely and simply identified with the ‘*sensus fidei*.’ The sense of the faith is a property of theological

⁴² Bill Huebsch, *Whole Community Catechesis in Plain English* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002), 105. “They sew the baptismal garment as a quilt, each sewing his or her faith into this baptism. They trim the candle. They prepare the rite. They write the baptismal promises in their own words. And when the time comes, the welcome and bless the newly baptized! And they hold a party.” (100)

⁴³ Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?*, xiii-xiv.

⁴⁴ *Donum veritatis*, 35.

faith; and, as God's gift which enables one to adhere personally to the Truth, it cannot err.”⁴⁵

Since the *Declaration of Independence* (1776), the *Constitution of the United States* (1788) and the *Bill of Rights* (1789), Americans have been rooted in the concept of individual rights. It was not inclusive in practice, often taking wars or civil unrest to become so, e.g., American Civil War, the suffragette movement of the early 1900's, the race riots of the 60's. Individual rights gave women the “right to choose” to abort their unborn children. It is exemplified now in the question of the civil rights of homosexual people, particularly the right to marry. Within the Church, the right to dissent has been discussed since 1968. The CDF responded. The Church's teaching seems to limit the freedom of theologians, but “these actions, by their fidelity to the faith which has been handed on, establish a deeper freedom which can only come from unity in truth.”⁴⁶

One cannot then appeal to these rights of man in order to oppose the interventions of the Magisterium. Such behavior fails to recognize the nature and mission of the Church which has received from the Lord the task to proclaim the truth of salvation to all men. She fulfills this task by walking in Christ's footsteps, knowing that ‘truth can impose itself on the mind only by virtue of its own truth, which wins over the mind with both gentleness and power.’⁴⁷

In reality, Gaillardetz's actions extend dissent's “influence to the point of shaping a common opinion, it tends to become the rule of conduct. This cannot but seriously trouble the People of God and lead to contempt for true authority.”⁴⁸

In 1995 Cardinal Avery Dulles addressed the “sense of the faithful” at the Pre-Convention Seminar at the Catholic Theological Society of America, entitled “Criteria of Catholic Theology.” “The sense of the faithful (*sensus fidelium*) cannot be ascertained by Gallup polls. It exists only in believers who are disposed to ‘think with the Church’ and is never separable from the guidance of the pastors. The saints, who are the preeminent bearers of the sense of the faith, brilliantly exemplified ways

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 34.

in which courageous initiative can be combined with loyalty, modesty, and prudence.”⁴⁹

The CDF refers to a phenomenon that has occurred often in the catechetical renewal since the Council. “Not all the ideas which circulate among the People of God are compatible with the faith. This is all the more so given that people can be swayed by a public opinion influenced by modern communications media. Not without reason did the Second Vatican Council emphasize the indissoluble bond between the ‘*sensus fidei*’ and the guidance of God’s People by the magisterium of the Pastors. These two realities cannot be separated.”⁵⁰

On March 22, 2007, the Doctrine Committee of the USCCB offered a “Public Correction” of Dr. Daniel Maguire, a former priest and theologian teaching at the Jesuit-run Marquette University. On June 19, 2006, Maguire sent two pamphlets to all the bishops of the United States: *The Moderate Roman Catholic Position of Contraception and Abortion* and *A Catholic Defense of Same-Sex Marriage*.

The bishops responded that the fundamental error in the pamphlets was the nature of Church teaching. Maguire had argued that there was no one position regarding contraception or abortion that could be called “Catholic.” His position on same-sex marriage states that “there are three sources of truth (or three ‘magisteria’): the hierarchy, the theologians, and the wisdom and experience of the laity (called in Latin *sensus fidelium*).”⁵¹

Maguire believed that the teaching on abortion was pluralistic, that it has a strong pro-choice tradition and a conservative anti-choice position. “Neither is official, and neither is more Catholic than the other.”⁵² As regards same-sex marriage, “Catholic teaching is in transition on this subject and Catholics are free to let their consciences decide either for or against same sex marriages. Both views...are at home in the

⁴⁹ Dulles, “Criteria of Catholic Theology”, *Communio* 22 (1995): 311.

⁵⁰ *Donum veritatis*, 35.

⁵¹ Maguire, quoted in “Statement Concerning Two Pamphlets Published by Professor Daniel Maguire”, Committee on Doctrine, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, March 22, 2007, www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2007/07-051.shtml, page 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Catholic world and neither one of them can be called more orthodox or more official or more Catholic than the other.”⁵³

In response the bishops asserted “from the earliest days of the Church, it has been clear that the bishops have a unique role in passing on the faith and applying the teaching of Christ to the circumstances of the day. Catholic teaching is authenticated by the Church’s teaching office that mirrors and transmits the revelation of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁴ The bishops continue, “It is a serious error, therefore, to claim that the teaching of the Pope and the bishops represents merely one voice among many legitimate voices within the Catholic Church, all of which are vying to be heard and accepted.”⁵⁵ “When the bishops together with the head of the college of bishops, the Pope, invoke the authority given to them by Christ to proclaim that one moral position is correct and another erroneous, this teaching is binding in conscience on all who hold the Catholic faith. It is not one of many possible ‘Catholic’ positions proposed by and debated among various theologians.”⁵⁶

The bishops clarify the sense of the faith, “The laity and the clergy embody and express the sense of the faith precisely when they conform their consciences to what the Church authentically professes and teaches.”⁵⁷

The bishops assert that while bishops and theologians have different gifts and functions, they have the same goal, “preserving the People of God in the truth which sets free and thereby making them a ‘light to the nations.’”⁵⁸ They conclude, “Professor Maguire’s conception of the role of the theologian, instead of elevating it, actually diminishes it, for it prevents the theologian from serving his goal.”⁵⁹

To Finish

The actions of the American bishops have providentially brought this thesis full circle to its conclusion. The Council called for *aggiornamento*, but asserted that the deposit

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.; The bishops cite *Donum veritatis*, 35; *LG*, 12; *DV*, 10; and *CCC*, 889.

⁵⁸ Ibid.; *Donum veritatis*, 21.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

of faith be guarded. It took a fresh look at the Church, Revelation, the Sacraments and the Church in the modern world. Its desire for all the faithful was that they become holy, and be united with God forever in the heavenly kingdom. Therefore Catechesis must be based on revelation and taught under the authority of the Magisterium of the Church. Failure to do so, by omission or commission, causes deficient religious education that is in the end detrimental to the salvation of the members of the Catholic Church. Ultimately, the solution to the difficulties experienced in catechesis during the last 40 years is based on love. Mathew Lamb stated that we need to know how doctrine of the past applies to the economic, social and political situation of the times. Reducing them to plausibility structure of their historical context would, “not do justice to the life-forms of those who lived the doctrines.”⁶⁰ He concluded, “To what extent are dogmas expressive of a knowledge born of transformative religious love- a ‘love that is not to be words or mere talk, but something real and active’ a love ‘only by which we can be certain that we belong to the realm of truth’? Insofar as dogmas are such knowledge and we fail to live by them, our experience will be anathema.”⁶¹

⁶⁰ Matthew Lamb, “Dogma, Experience and Political Theology”, in *Revelation and Experience*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 88. This volume is part of Concilium: Religion in the Seventies, a multi-volume library of contemporary religious thought published in 10 volumes annually.

⁶¹ Ibid.

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